

# The Star

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THE Alternative Venue

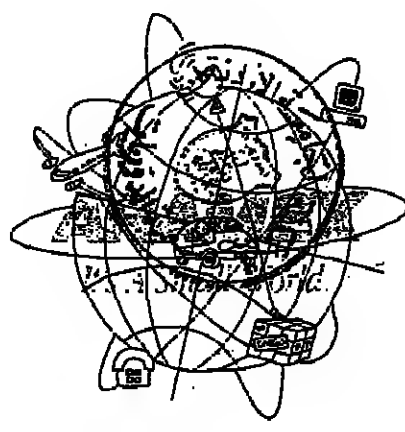
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اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

## King, Arafat meeting sets relations on right course

By Ahmed Shaker

**P**RESIDENT ARAFAT'S recent visit to Jordan was viewed by Amman political circles as his most important visit ever to the Kingdom. Though it was brief, lasting only 16 hours, the visit laid down the basis for the most significant stage of the Palestinian state. This is the final phase of negotiations which is to resolve all pending issues between the Palestinians and the Israelis in a practical and realistic manner.

President Arafat was personally interested in coming to Amman soon after his visit of a few hours in Cairo to confirm that Egypt and Jordan are his two essential partners and to show that he particularly looks forward to Jordan's support in all the issues that will be discussed with Israel in the final stage.

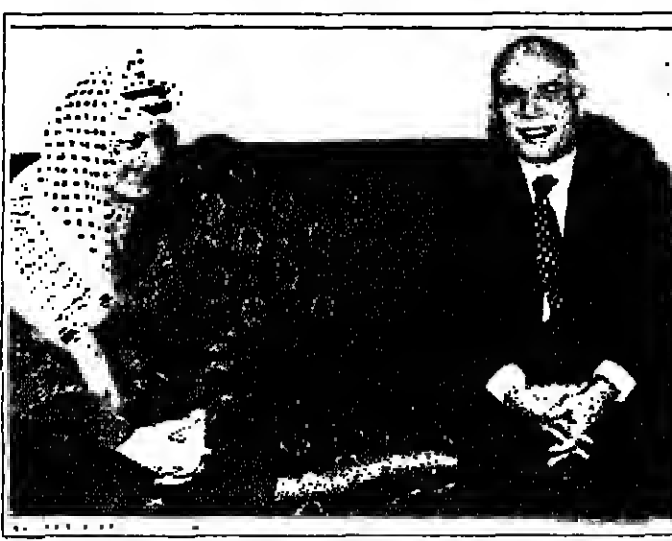
The statements of His Majesty King Hussein were very clear in reiterating Jordan's welcome of the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital on Palestinian soil. Thus, His Majesty discredited the attempts of some Israeli media to offend Jordan by alleging that, during his meedog with

Israeli Foreign Minister Yehud Barak, King Hussein voiced concern about the imminent set up of a Palestinian entity or state.

King Hussein also expressed Jordan's unequivocal support for the Palestinian people and their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital. This put an end to the alleged divergence between Jordan and the PLO on the future of Jerusalem and the allegations that Jordan was trying to spread its hegemony to the city within the context of its religious custody of the holy places.

The need of the self-rule authorities for Jordanian expertise was another issue accentuated during the discussions. King Hussein emphasized that he already advised Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker to provide the Palestinians with all the consultancy and expertise needed.

King Hussein extended great hospitality to President Arafat, putting his private aircraft at his disposal. King Hussein, HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Prime Minister and other top ranking officials received Arafat and saw him off at Amman Civil Airport. Soon after Arafat's arrival, everyone attended prolonged working



session at the Royal Court, which lasted until 3 am. Then both leaders had a light meal before ending their meeting at 6 am. What is noteworthy is that President Arafat canceled a scheduled meeting with Palestinian National Council members residing in Jordan.

After a few hours of rest, President Arafat resumed talks with the Prime Minister, during which he presented a proposal for consideration by the Jordanian government. Among other things, the paper included a list of Jordanian experts recom-

mended by the self-rule authorities to work in the PNA areas for one year. It also included the PNA's plans and its intention to establish a Palestinian currency. However, the Palestinian president assured Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker that work on this issue would not begin in less than three years, keeping the Jordanian dinar as the main currency of circulation in the self-rule areas.

President Arafat is said to have extended an invitation to the Prime Minister to visit the

self-rule areas, and that Sbarif Zeid promised to do so after the Eid el Fitr holidays.

The next few weeks will witness an enforcement of all bilateral agreements between the two sides. Meetings will be held in Amman, Gaza and Ramallah by the sub-committees to discuss putting the economic, financial, agricultural, industrial, communication and energy agreements into action.

President Arafat also briefed King Hussein on his talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. A trilateral meeting of the three leaders is expected to take place in Cairo next month to coordinate their positions for the next era and to support Palestinian negotiations on the issues that need finalizing. This meeting will be convened just a few weeks before the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations are scheduled to finalize agreements on issues such as refugees, borders, the status of Jerusalem, water resources and settlements.

Arafat described the solution of these problems as the true key to peace. He said that without a just and honorable solution to these problems, the whole peace process in the region will collapse.

## 110 000 enfants condamnés en Irak

A LIRE p. 8 dans LE JOURDAIN

## Pentagon memo may threaten US spy's release to Israel

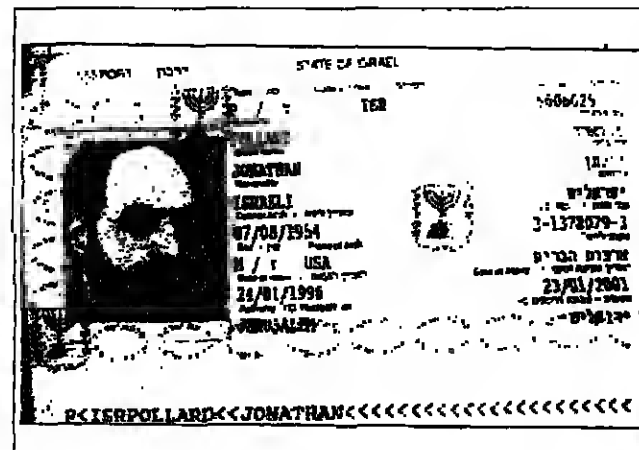
By Marjorie Miller  
La Times-Washington Post News Service

**J**ERUSALEM—Publication of a Pentagon memo warning that Israel may be using American Jews to spy on military contractors comes at a bad time for the Israeli government's quiet efforts to win the release of Jonathan Jay Pollard, an American Jew who spied for Israel.

The internal memo, asserting that Israel was trying to steal US military and industrial secrets by exploiting "strong ethnic ties" in the United States, raises anew the specter of American Jews with a dual loyalty. And it has prompted some Israelis to suggest the leak may have been a move to stymie efforts to get Pollard a presidential pardon—even though the memo was publicized by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith, a prominent Jewish organization. "Obviously, there are a lot of American Jews in sensitive positions and it is tempting to make accusations," said Joseph Alpher, director of the Israel/Middle East office of the American Jewish Committee in Jerusalem.

But the memo—later retracted—apparently did not document new cases of espionage or point to "the next Pollard," Alpher said, and so he suspects there was another motive behind its release. "Maybe the leak of the report was carried out by people who wanted to keep Pollard in jail," he said.

The ADL said in a letter to US Defense Secretary William J. Perry that the Pentagon directive "impugns American Jews and borders on anti-Semitism."



Pollard's Israeli passport

American Jewish leaders also said the memo reflects the mood in the US intelligence community since Pollard's spying for Israel was discovered 10 years ago.

The Pollard case has been a painful embarrassment for the Israeli government, first because it was caught spying on its chief benefactor and ally, and then—after claiming Pollard's spying was a rogue operation—because it was seen by many Israeli citizens as having effectively abandoned one of its own on the battlefield.

Many Israelis feel their government has allowed Pollard to languish in US prisons rather than fight with the United States over his release. Last year, a sympathetic play called "Pollard" drew huge crowds in Tel Aviv and helped supporters collect tens of thousands of signatures on a petition calling for presidential clemency.

Three prime ministers have raised the issue with American presidents in one form or another. Prime Minister Yit-

zhak Rabin brought it up with President Clinton just weeks before he was assassinated last November. Shimon Peres brought up the pardon on his last trip to Washington, DC.

Last week, Israel granted Pollard citizenship and an Israeli passport, hoping to give a boost to the appeal for a pardon.

At least until the publication of the confidential memo on Tuesday, the Israeli government had felt its chances were good of getting a pardon from such a friendly American president, even though the US intelligence and defense communities have been steadfastly opposed to any break for the convicted spy.

"The Pollard affair left a big scar, and I think we learned our lesson," said a government official who declined to be identified. "But we feel he has served 10 years and it's time already. He has paid his dues. This has become a humanitarian issue."

## Minister of Interior under hammer from human rights activists

By Raed Al Abed

**T**HEY KILLED my son, (and) now they want to ruin his reputation," said Mrs. Matar, whose young son, Ahmad, was shot dead in his car by a policeman in September last year. She was responding to the Minister of Interior, Mr. Salamah Hammad, who said, "...the car that the student Ahmad—was riding in, was wanted in drug cases..."

"This is a fabrication against my son and contradicts police reports and the testimonies of policemen in court," Mrs. Matar told *The Star*. "The car was completely clean, and it wasn't wanted by anybody, as was confirmed by the chief of the metropolitan police department. His excellency can refer to the police report, which I doubt he has not

already seen."

Mr. Hammad's statement came in a memo sent to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in reply to a draft report of the Arab Human Rights Organization (AHRO) annual report concerning public liberties in Jordan. In this memo, which was released to the press last week, Mr. Hammad denied that there are any human rights violations in the country, and stated the Government's full adherence to the constitution and the law. He described the report as "containing false information and having no basis in reality."

Surprisingly, early this week, the AHRO stated that it has yet to release its annual report for 1995. "Like any other social civic organization, the secretary of the council prepares a draft of the report,



Hammad

which is then discussed by the members of the board, before

its release," said Dr. Labib Kamhawi, vice president of the AHRO. "Such report is unofficial and does not represent the organization until it is ratified."

At the same time, the organization did not deny the human rights violations mentioned in the draft report, but expressed its astonishment over the fact that the Minister had gained access to it.

"The information in the draft report is 100 percent correct, and does not even reflect the whole picture. The final report will be released in February as usual," said Kamhawi. "The Minister's behavior aims at creating a state of conflict with the organization."

In a press conference held at the headquarters of the AHRO this week, the organization reiterated its allegations and presented witnesses who were victims of violations, but whose claims were denied by Mr. Hammad. "Upon the request of the General Intelligence Dept (GID), I was dismissed from my work at the Ministry of Culture, and later the same thing happened at Royal Jordanian," said Mr. Kayid Kalbneh, who was a member of the student council at the University of Jordan, and a member of the leftist Hashd party. "After several attempts at finding out the reason behind these dismissals, I was told by the GID that I constitute a threat to state security," said Mr. Kalbneh who has been suffering

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## Tale of two cities: For both, it is the worst of times

By Josh Friedman

**L**A Times-Washington Post News Service

**B**ELAH, Bosnia-Herzegovina—When Police Chief Ivo Katic speaks, people here in the Usora Valley listen and obey. But only in Usora. "Katic, a Croat, is like the several thousand other Croats in this tiny, self-proclaimed municipality in central Bosnia, a virtual prisoner here. If he ventures across the Usora River a few hundred yards east of police headquarters, he is likely to be arrested by the Muslim police chief of Tesanj, his former boss, Semudin Mehmedovic, who has already arrested Katic twice."

"He is a fanatic religious nationalist—a very deluded man," says Katic, 33, whose office prominently displays a picture of Pope John Paul II warmly greeting Croatian President Franjo Tudjman.

A few miles away and across the river, Mehmedovic, an athletically built man of few words, agrees to an interview

after his midafternoon prayers. Tired and a little cranky because of his Ramadan fast, Mehmedovic, 35, doesn't have much good to say about Katic, either.

"He was a hard worker but he fell in with Croatian nationalists and became disloyal. Then he became a spy," said Mehmedovic, whose office is adorned with pictures of Islamic landmarks and slogans in Arabic.

Former co-workers, now bitter enemies, the two men are playing out on a small stage the drama that on a national level is creating worry from Sarajevo to Washington.

DC, about the future of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which envisions a multi-ethnic government stabilized by a multiethnic police force.

The 22-month-old federation is now threatened by an inability of the Muslims and Croats, on-and-off allies against the Serbs, to trust each other and

live under each other's authority.

In some communities recently, Muslim and Croat police forces have beaten each other's people—and sometimes killed them. In Usora, the tension between the police forces drove Croat and Muslim troops to the brink of armed combat in the last few weeks.

Danish NATO troops moved in at the last minute to separate the two sides. But NATO officials sound nearly helpless, despite their military power, to resolve the situation since they say it is beyond their mission and must be addressed by the United Nations' 1,700-strong international police force, which is still months from full deployment, according to UN sources.

The commander of US forces in Bosnia, Gen. William Nash, believes that Muslim-Croat tensions, especially in Usora and other areas such as the Breko region to the north of Tuzla and Vares to the south, pose the most serious threat to implementing the Dayton, Ohio, agreement, according to NATO and Bosnian military officials who are working to deal with the problem.

Ironically, there is less concern about Bosnian Serbs, who have so far not actively resisted the Dayton agreement.

The Muslim-Croat enmity is nothing new. In a stroke of cosmic bad luck, Bosnia is on the front line where East and West butt up against each other. Croatian Catholics act as if they are defending Rome against Serbian Orthodox Christians and Bosnian Muslims, both of whom trace their roots to Constantinople—renamed Istanbul in 1930 by the Turks. Many have tried to suppress the area's ethnic differences—from the Ottoman Turks to the Austro-Hungarian empire to the World War II Axis powers of Germany and Italy to the Soviet Union. All have failed.

Now come the United States and the European Community, trying to stem the ethnic blood-bath of the collapse of Yugoslavia. Their first attempt failed because they did not give the United Nations a strong mandate or adequate firepower. Now NATO—armed with sweeping powers under last month's Dayton agreement and up to 60,000 troops—is trying.

The landscape of the Usora

Valley depicts the ethnic split that is roiling it. Croat communities dating back hundreds of years dot the hills on the Usora River's west side, where the Croats have unilaterally declared their own municipality, though most of its population, estimated at from 5,000 to 18,000, is working abroad. Catholic churches stand on the hilltops and stores and houses display pictures of saints and the pope.

Just to the east side of the river is the municipality of Tesanj, based in a picturesque town dominated by a hilltop fortress built by the Romans and reinforced by the Ottoman Turks. The spires of mosques poke up among old houses.

On the roads, decommissioned soldiers return home in ragtag uniforms. Separate flags—red and white for Croats; blue, white and gold for Muslims—hang in front of homes or over streets.

To the north of both groups are the Serbs, kept at bay by a 2 1/2-mile zone of separation patrolled by NATO troops from Denmark.

The Danes, who deployed in an abandoned factory near Tesanj, are trying to keep the

Continued on page 2

## UN to open talks with Iraq on oil sales

By John M. Goshko

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

**U**NITED NATIONS—Iraqi and UN officials will begin talks on 6 February about permitting the Baghdad government to sell oil to earn money for food and humanitarian aid for its hard-pressed people. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali announced this week.

He set the date after Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's government said it is willing to enter discussions based on the oil-for-food formula decreed by the Security Council to afford partial relief from the economic and financial sanctions imposed on Iraq during the 1990-1991 Kuwait crisis and Gulf War.

Informed diplomatic sources said it is too early to tell whether this new round of talks will be more successful than previous efforts, which ended without any agreements. However, initial indications are that Iraq will seek to modify the UN formula in ways unacceptable to the United States and its allies on the Security Council, the sources said. If so, they added, the new talks are likely to result in further stalemate.

The sanctions have remained in effect for five years because a special UN commission monitoring Iraq's behavior says it has not complied fully with council demands, including the dismantling of its program to develop weapons of mass destruction. Iraq agreed to these conditions as the price for ending the hostilities that began with its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 and led to its forcible expulsion from Kuwait in early 1991 by the US-led Desert Storm military



Oil sales are needed to finance humanitarian relief

operation. Baghdad also has rejected as a violation of its sovereignty the council's conditions for a limited, tightly controlled oil sale to generate funds for humanitarian relief. The UN plan, outlined in Security Council resolution 986, would permit Iraq to sell \$2 billion worth of oil over six months. Baghdad has balked at the UN's insistence that it control the amount of humanitarian supplies that go to Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq, and that most of the oil be shipped via

Iraq's pipeline through Turkey rather than Iraq's port at Mina al-Bakr. The latest attempt to break the impasse will be conducted initially by Abdul Amir Anbari, who was Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations at the time of the Gulf War, and Undersecretary General Hans Corell, the UN's legal counsel. UN sources said their efforts will determine whether the talks will be elevated to a higher level involving Boutros-Ghali and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz.







People & Politics

Deputies, patriotism and the responsible press

IT'S PROBABLY Ramadan that's getting to the nerves of Jordanian deputies. Or else how can one explain the recent row between Ramtha deputy Abdel Karim Al Dughni and IAF deputy from Amman Sheikh Abdel Mun'im Abu Zant under the eyes and noses of the media. But if it is not Ramadan and the fasting this ill temper can be a sign of over-anticipation, and hysteria, associated usually with news of an upcoming Cabinet reshuffle. In all cases it was a disgrace. Not that deputies in other democracies do not fight, bite and curse each other. But one would have thought that more than five years after democracy was restored in Jordan, our deputies, some serving for their second term, would have contributed to the creation of democratic traditions and values, setting an example for the whole nation.

But that is not to be. In fact Jordanians are disgusted by the childish games our deputies indulge in, mostly in search of fame, Government attention and personal interests. To be fair to deputies and to the Parliamentary institution, the Government may have helped in corrupting deputies by recruiting them as ministers in return for their full and unequivocal support. This is a phenomenon that may have contributed to the erosion in the stature and influence that deputies used to enjoy in the past.

It is no wonder then that Governments are having it easy since the formula of the minister/deputy was first introduced a few Governments ago. We miss the early days of democratic revivalism when deputies labored out at the misbehavior of ministers and when public accountability was more than a newspaper headline or a title of a political seminar.

The voters should retaliate—and they are expected to, especially with this Lower House. This is probably one of the reasons why deputies, on both sides of the fence, are becoming nervous as the term of this House becomes shorter day after day. Talk of a new election law, supposedly fairer to the voters and the constituencies, should make some deputies worry about their chances at re-election.

The irony is that amid all this tug of war between the deputies and the minister/deputy members of the Cabinet and the Government, the public is the odd man out. What we've ended up with is a lame-duck Parliament where deputies eschew direct confrontation with the Government over public issues for fear over personal interests. Such appeasement by both sides has created the current disillusion that many Jordanians have with democracy. And that's why it only adds insult to injury when we see deputies fighting it out like thugs and not even over a fundamental issue of principle.

Which brings us to this week's meeting between editors of Jordanian weeklies and Prime Minister Sharif Zaid Ben Shaker. The Premier made it clear that he was all for "a patriotic Jordanian form of opposition press" which highlighted the negative in good spirit and attempted to reform from the inside, away from external influence. One can write journals about such press in an attempt to define what a patriotic opposition press is all about. The problem is that the Government takes the weekly Arabic press too seriously even if a newspaper is a rag sheet read by a handful of readers. In its impossible task to control the weeklies, by threats and by promises, the Government has lost its temper at times and acted foolishly. It should not have done so because it does not need to. It does not need to worry about a silly rumor being circulated in a yellow sensationalistic newspaper. It's not its job to check the credibility of each and every story that appears in the local press. But what about Jordan's image abroad? Surely one does not form an opinion about Britain only by reading *The Sun* or *News of the World*. And if a newspaper of a few hundred copies is capable of shattering Jordan's image abroad, by running stories about sex and violence in the Kingdom, then imagine what our mainstream newspapers, whose circulation is in the thousands can do to offset that negative image? We would be lucky if we were able to create a system of checks and balances for the Jordanian press, which is after all in part and parcel of the Jordanian political institution and the democratic framework. But to go after generalities such as patriotic opposition and responsible criticism would take us off course immediately and get us into a grey area where patriotism becomes a matter of the literary taste of the critic!

Minister of Interior under hammer from human rights activists

Continued from page 1

ford kidney failure for the past five years. He asks "with my health condition, what kind of threat do I pose to state security?"

In reference to the case of the students at Muta University who were accused of planning to assassinate His Majesty King Hussein, Mr. Hammad stated that these students have all regained their rights after acquitted from court, and are now studying in the civil branch of the university. "This is incorrect and all of these students are now studying in private universities at the expense of their families," said Hussein Al Jodi, one of the acquitted students. "We did not even get our passports or other identification cards back, we only have the military ID."

In the case of Laith Shbeilat, Mr. Hammad said "Shbeilat was apprehended in accordance with the law and he is being given a fair trial. He also added that talk of attempts to arrest Shbeilat's son—Farhan—is pure fabrication."

Mrs Shbeilat demanded that the Minister apologize to her as she considers this a response to statements that she had previously made to the press. "I do not lie, only cowards lie," said Mrs Shbeilat.

"Before the arrest of my father, the Prosecutor General dragged me by the hand in an attempt to take me until they arrest my father, but my mother interfered, and he let go," said Ehsan Shbeilat.

Deputy Abdel Aziz Jabir confirmed what was mentioned in the AHRO draft report that he and another three Islamic deputies were briefly interrogated by the Prosecutor General, and were accused of anti-normalization activities. "Only when our colleagues in the Lower House held an emergency meeting, and condemned these investigations, did the Government withdraw the case," Mr. Jabir said.

Dr Theib Abdallah, head of the Public Liberties Committee of the Lower House responded to the Minister's statements by saying that while the Minister claimed that the GID does not arrest any citizen except by order of the Prosecutor General of the State Security Court, he is aware of "numerous cases in which the security services arrested citizens without such an order and detained them for a long period of time before trial," Dr Abdallah said.

He added that although the Minister denies that the GID interferes to prevent the issuance of passports to certain citizens, while seizing the passports of others, he knows of "many cases in which passports were withdrawn and are still in the hands of the GID."

Furthermore, in the case of Mahmoud Al Awamleh, Mr Hammad stated that Awamleh was killed while the police were trying to arrest him. Dr Abdallah said "the Minister is blaming the dead man for failing to report to his local police station." He added that "the security forces could have arrested Awamleh in such a way that did not endanger his life."



The Planning Minister Dr Rima Khalaf was the guest of honor at a reception organized by the Jordan Businessmen Association at the Philadelphia Hotel, Sunday. The minister said that the Government is determined to reform the existing laws to attract more investment to Jordan. This is the first of a series of economic meetings that will be held by the association.

The Ambassador of Belgium to Jordan Mr Guido Courtois Partnership comes in to replace the old concept of we give and you take

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr Guido Courtois is ambassador of Belgium to Jordan. A veteran diplomat, he started his career in 1973 and has served in Washington, in the Hague; as head of mission in Angola; in Brussels as diplomatic advisor, then for two years as ambassador to Tunis before coming to Jordan. He talked this week to *The Star* Chief Editor Osama El Sherif and Managing Editor Marwan Al Asmar about Europe's vision of economic partnership with the Mediterranean countries, human rights and democracy in the Arab world and Europe's commitment to the Palestinians. Excerpts follow.



Courtois

What are the prospects of partnership between Europe and the Mediterranean countries in the aftermath of the Barcelona conference?

I think they depend mainly on two elements given the geopolitical situation that we share with the Mediterranean: the willingness of the countries of Europe to extend such cooperation to the countries of the south, and the willingness and ability of the countries of the south to respond in kind. It is not a one-way street. You have to be ready, willing and able to engage in this kind of matrimony. Some might be willing, but not able, some might be ready but not willing, incidentally this goes for countries of central Europe. They are all willing, but to say that they are able is another thing. The same goes for the countries around the Mediterranean. It is not a matter only of what Europe wants, but of what these countries want and to what extent they wish to begin cooperating with one another. The Mediterranean is a vast pasture that extends from Gibraltar to practically the Gulf. Sometimes, it is a foggy concept, but as far as security is concerned, it is a very useful concept, because it is easily defined. Jordan is more eager to prove that it is willing and able because it is on the margin, you can't have a security arrangement in the eastern Med that doesn't include Jordan, simply because it does not have a shore, unlike for example, Syria.

Are you satisfied with the response of Jordan to your partnership and do they understand the logic behind the move from aid giving into a partnership with Europe?

It depends at which level you are talking about... There will always [be those who are] jockeying for tactics... because at the end of the day, it is a political decision; and will be judged in all fairness; is this our interest? Do we value our interest in terms of nickels and dimes or millions of ECUs or whatever, or do we value our interests in terms of the start of a new relationship and the conviction that there is enough goodwill on the other side that can make this true. Does the Jordanian side think that it is in the European's interest to make Jordan a pole of economic growth and political stability? If they say yes, it is in their interest, then of course they can cut through all the red tape and all the technical declarations, then it becomes a matter of who can get there in the end. If money is what makes you happy, then money is what you are looking for. If you are looking for something else, something more than money, then you are looking for a partnership.

Partnership means both parties contribute to this relationship. Realistically speaking, how do you see the development of the relationship between Europe and the Mediterranean within the context of aid giving and aid taking?

If you want someone to be a partner, he has to be equal at least in potential. We have been unsuccessfully trying for the past 30 years or so. There was too much give and take. It can only work out within the framework of a partnership, and co-decision. This means circulation from one to the other in anticipation that something will go from the other to the first out of a common interest which can be realized only if countries work together. It is the interest of Europe to have a strong southern flank, now it is being swamped with economic refugees from central Europe, that is not to say it may be like the crusades in reverse, but it certainly looks

course, to us, it is a natural continuation of our territory. To the Americans, it is the other side of the world.

We have the same interests [with the Americans]. It is [the Middle East] a very volatile region in terms of political stability because it has oil. If it didn't have oil, who cares. Its population density is low, not much can happen, it will self regulate... We feel that many countries of the region will be looking at the European Union to balance what is seen as the American steamroller.

Don't you think that it is Europe who failed to throw its own weight given problems in its own backyard like Bosnia? The Americans had to come in and put an end to the Bosnian problem, which is a European problem, is this not embarrassing?

What you are saying is a little bit unfair to the Europeans. The Americans could never have achieved the final push had it not been for the footwork of the Europeans. Ok, there were mistakes, to my feelings, the Germans were much too fast in trying to find a solution. Also, don't forget the kind of environment we are operating in. And who is the one capable of counterbalancing Russia. It is the Security Council. In the end what allowed the Americans to push through a solution was the fact that it was acceptable to the Russians. There was also divisions between the approaches of different countries in the European Union... One member country felt very close to the Serbs because they had an orthodox religion, another country felt close in the Croats because they share a language or share a history. Unfortunately there was no country that felt close to the Bosnians, except the people who had a humanitarian concern and even then it was not made easy, because in Europe, Islam has been judged in recent years very much in terms of terrorism. We're not talking about Jordan, which is a tolerant country, as far as religion is concerned.

How important is it for Europe to have the Jordanian and Palestinian democratic experiments succeed in this region?

It's fundamental because for a very long time we lived in a world where a lack of democracy was tolerated. This took place in the framework of a bi-polar politics. A lot of things were tolerated because we sided with one party against the other. But that era ended in the late eighties. We were blind to many violations including ones on our own side, we only saw the violations on the other side. Now it is becoming fundamental not because the bi-polar world has ended but because the world has become much smaller, through communications and technology. For us democracy means as many individual rights as possible to as many individuals as possible. That is the aim at least. So it is very important that you should have these experiments and I hope it is not just an experiment in Jordan. But it has to be accompanied by a number of things

Point of order

By Raed Al Abed

Falafil on the negotiation table, not to eat, but to compromise!

During the recent unofficial Syrian-Israeli supper in Maryland in the USA, where they had been negotiating peace, the subject of *falafil* came up. What, one may ask does *falafil* have to do with anything?

But the question was seriously pondered by the negotiators: "Is *falafil* a Syrian traditional food or an Israeli one."

Such an amusing question created a friendly argument but in the end there was no agreement. We have already peacefully given the Israelis more than they dream of. What more do they want? This is a clever move by the Israelis, because *falafil*, *homus* and *fool*, are the only weapons that are left in our hands. Such an Israeli claim, if taken seriously, will strip the Arab nation of its last hope to liberate Palestine from the river to the sea. If the Israelis succeed, Jordanians will be most worried. What will happen to the popular Hashim restaurant in downtown Amman? What will happen to nur traditions, culture and nur way of life? Hashim's famous slogan on one of its walls is 'with *falafil*, *homus*, and *fool*, we will liberate Palestine.' The international community must intervene, at least this time, and settle the argument with the Israelis by a blood test. We are confident that our blood will prove (*falafil*).

Israel to legalize torture, adding to its record

The reputed Shin Bet, the Israeli secret service, is not satisfied with its history of killing and physical torture of innocent Palestinians. Ironically, last week the Israeli Minister of Justice, David Lebi showed the press a draft law that legalizes torture in an organized method. This is to be used during interrogation of Palestinian activists. The proposal will be presented to the Israeli government and then to the Knesset.

International human rights bodies, like Amnesty International, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other UN committees, still release reports condemning Israeli human rights violations against defenseless Palestinians in Israeli custody.

By legalizing torture, the Israelis will become the first in the world to legalize physical violence. This is to say nothing of their record in this respect.

The Israeli impudence is startling with its officials stating that: Methods of physical violence which will be used will comply with the anti-torture articles of international human rights conventions. At the time that none of the international conventions allow any sort of physical violence against civilians or even against captured military men during war. Israel will have a hard time proving that its 'torture' is humane.

The world must understand that such Israeli attitudes will be faced by an escalated struggle by those who never trusted the peace treaties with Israel. Abused people have the right to fight abusers, this is the nature of man. For those who supported the creation of Israel, this is considered terrorism, but for victims it is a legal fight.

because democracy alone cannot survive if you don't have wealth, equal opportunities, a fair chance for social advancement, liberty to start initiatives, hope for the future. You need freedom to trade with your neighbors, you need political stability and security. We have a moral obligation to help preserve Jordan's experiment—which is admirable. We also feel this responsibility to the Palestinians. The Europeans have been encouraging the Palestinians for a long time. It began with the Euro-Arab dialogue; Belgium allowed the Palestinians to open their representative office in 1978, a year before the Declaration of Venice. I think the Europeans played an important role in this regard, especially when the Americans were absent, to start the ongoing process.

How do you see the case of human rights in Jordan?

Considering the circumstances, the surroundings, the history, Jordanians as a nation are doing a pretty good job. But one can do better. It is a matter of norms. Look at the media and its role. Look at the issue of women's rights in Jordan for example. Things have to change and they have to be debated in public. Coming back to the issue of human rights I would like to say that it is useless to try to advocate human rights on the basis of universal norms because there are no universal norms, and if there are, they change. What was acceptable 50 years ago is no longer acceptable today. Fortunately perceptions are changing but they are slow. So how do we achieve change, we do it through contracts. If you want something from me, I will give it but we sign a contract. We must agree about certain ground rules and we do this with all the countries with which we have association

agreements. We make it part of the deal so that we have rule of law that was agreed upon by sovereign parties. And we will stand by this because there is no monolithic power—all powers are about coalition, even in despotism.

How do you see Europe's commitment to back the Palestinian National Authority in its endeavor to achieve its final objectives?

This is a big problem. Abu Ammar [Yasser Arafat] is no democrat. He's a revolutionary. It will not be easy for him to transform himself. But he has made many contributions to the next generation of Palestinians because now there is peace. Democrats don't stand out in war. We always stood by him. But the elections are the first step. How do you expect the PLO, which has been fighting for its life, to emerge all of a sudden and say now we are going to become a democracy. We proved this commitment on the ground. Now after the election, the opposition will have to be integrated. You have to go for unity and not for separation.

Do you think a Palestinian state is inevitable?

Yes. Down the road, but not as soon as Arafat expects. The next stage is not about a state, it is about the final stage negotiations. It is about forming a council, about convening the PNC and repealing the offensive clauses in the Palestinian Charter. I can even see some sort of confederation, the three entities, Jordan, Palestine and Israel working together. But first you have to settle the matter of Jerusalem, the refugees, the settlers... Every thing can be imagined as long as there is peace.

The Star  
Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly  
On Line  
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Go to E-arabia city and select the News Tower...  
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## Business scene

**The Board of Directors of the Palestinian Beit al Mal Corporation intends to establish the Aqsa Islamic Bank with a paid up capital of \$20 million. Saudi Arabian Dallah Al Barakeh Group subscribed by 26%, while the Jordanian Islamic Bank had a 14% contribution. Beit al Mal itself participated 20% of the total capital, where as the remaining shares were covered by Palestinian and Arab investors. The new bank will be located in Ramallah, with branches in Nablus, Hebron and Gaza. Verbal license has been obtained by the PNA.**

**Jordan Cement Factories Corporation (JCF) supplied the local market in 1995 with 2,682 million tons, and exported 7,800 tons, compared to 2,521 million tons and 887,000 tons respectively in 1994. Total profits of the JCF in 1995 amounted to JD 25 million, while net profits were JD 17 million. JCF exports in '95 were worth \$33.6 million.**

**The Arab Potash Co. (APC) realized a JD 42 million profit in 1995 (a 75% increase over 1994). The company exported 1,764 million tons to 32 countries and accrued \$182 million in '95. The APC plans to increase its production capacity to 2.2 million tons during the next three years.**

**The Al Saqr Insurance Co. (SIC) will open up to 50% of its JD 3 million paid up capital for public subscription next month. The 1.5 million shares are to be put for public writing in accordance with the wishes of many financiers said the chairman of the founding committee Mr Al Fared Al Sa'ad.**

**Jordan will receive grants and soft loans from the EU in 1996. The amount worth \$350 million, \$140 million of which is an unrepaid amount. These loans will help both Jordan's balance of payments and its foreign reserves.**

**Jordan's exports to Saudi Arabia from January till November of 1995 were JD 58 million; to Kuwait, JD 895,400; Qatar, 9 million; UAE, JD 39.5 million; Bahrain, JD 13.5 million; and Oman only JD 2.5 million. Imports from these countries were JD 83 million, JD 127,600, JD 5.5 million, JD 10.5 million, JD 25.5 million, and JD 3.5 million respectively.**

Foreign Exchange	
Wednesday, 30 JANUARY	
Buy JD	Sell JD
0.7080	0.7100
1.0665	1.0715
0.4774	0.4798
0.5859	0.5888
0.1388	0.1395
0.6630	0.6663
0.4254	0.4275
0.0446	0.0445

**AMMAN (Star)—A recent study by the Amman Chamber of Commerce (ACC) states that with the outbreak of the Iraq-Iran war, the Iraqi market became strategic to Jordanian exports. Between 1979 and 1988, these exports increased five-fold, while Jordanian imports from Iraq grew by 50 times.**

**Economic and trade relations between Jordan and Iraq go back to the early 1950s. These were modest at the outset but witnessed remarkable development and growth during the 1980s.**

**When the Gulf Crisis erupted in 1990/91, Jordanian exports were dealt a heavy blow as a result of the UN-imposed sanctions on Iraq. Jordan's trade balance with Iraq was negative. That is, while Iraq remained the main source of oil supply, the latter's trade volume with the Arab countries, especially the Gulf states, fell sharply and its trade deficit increased.**

**In the 1990s, Jordan's exports to Iraq differed from one year to another. In 1995, 439 Jordanian factories produced and delivered 235 different commodities to the Iraqi**

# Iraq market remains vital to Jordan

**market. Between 1989-1995, Jordan's exports to Iraq were worth \$2.15 billion. In 1995 alone, Jordan's exports to Iraq grew by 166% over 1989, whereas they increased by 250% in the 1980s over 1979. However, in spite of the repercussions and restrictions generated by the Gulf Crisis, Iraq continued to be the main market for Jordan exports.**

**The ACC study notes that while Jordan manufactured 108 different groups of commodities in 1989, at a cost of JD 9 million, these were reduced to only 12 groups in 1995 as a result of the Gulf War and the subsequent deprivation of Jordan's products from entering their strategic markets in Iraq**

**and the Gulf States. The ACC study purports that if the situation had continued as it used to be before the war, Jordanian exports would have realized high growth levels and would have helped Jordan's trade balance with Iraq and with Arab and foreign countries.**

**The Gulf Crisis also deprived Jordan of Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti crude oil. As a result, Iraq became the main oil supplier for Jordan. In 1989, Jordan's imports of crude oil were 2.5 million tons at JD 190.3 million. They increased by nearly three million tons in 1995 at a value of JD 235.2 million, 95% of which came from Iraq. Since**

**1991, Jordan's imports of oil products increased from 596,100 tons, worth JD 37.0 million in 1989 to about 1.1 million tons, worth nearly JD 66 million in 1995. Iraq's share of these supplies was 39% and earned 46% of their total value. This share then grew to 93% of the value and 82% of the volume of Jordan's imports of this commodity.**

**This situation was evident in the stoppage of sulfur (brimstone) imports from both Kuwait and Iraq since 1991, the two main sources of this important material to Jordanian industry. Iraq's exports of brimstone to Jordan was 56.2% of the latter's total imports. Hence, Jordan had to**

**find another source. This became Saudi Arabia. The ACC study explains that the retreat in the Jordan-Iraq trade exchange has had negative and harmful effect on Jordanian land transport services. The figures show that Jordan's fleet of land shipping trucks and ice-box transport fell from 9,423 vehicles in 1989 to only 7,157 in 1994 (a 24% decrease). Likewise, land transport trips were substantially reduced from 82,359 trips in 1989 to 14,303 in 1994, and the cargo decreased from 2.7 million tons to 327,400 tons respectively. Nevertheless, 99.3% of those trips were destined to Iraq during this period.**

**The study points also out that the UN sanctions against Iraq had badly affected the activities of the Aqaba port. Indeed, the number of the visiting ships in 1990 decreased by 9.2% from 1989, and by 7.0% in 1991 from the year before. Jordan's exports and transit cargo from Aqaba port fell by 26% in 1994 from 1989, while its exports in the third quarter of 1995 were only 55% of total exports in 1989. Moreover, other exports and transit shipments fell from 1.2 million tons in 1989 to only 53,000 tons in 1994, and stayed below their level in the third quarter of '95 (only 3.3% of the total exports of '89). The incoming transit to Aqaba was 6.2 million tons in '89, whereas in '94 it became 388,000 tons, and constituted, to the third quarter of '95, approximately 8% of its total volume in '89. The Royal Jordanian Airlines (RJ) was also affected by the UN sanctions against Iraq. Between 1986-1990, RJ carried 3.0% of the total number of its passengers to Iraq. The bulk of RJ flights to Iraq meant a loss of fares and revenues. In addition, RJ lost 1.4% of total air cargo that was meant to be shipped to Iraq, because of the sanctions. In fact, 99% of air Jordanian and co-Jordanian cargo to Iraq was transferred by RJ.**

## Protecting a Jordanian future in technological know how

**Rasim S. Abder-Rahim:**  
**IF WE are to create a better Jordan for tomorrow, there are many factors that have to be recognized, and many steps to be taken.**

**Encouragement of young Jordanian businesspeople to invest more in technology and in research and development.**

**Encouragement of Jordanian colleges and universities graduates to pursue technically motivating educational streams that help create better and more readily available job opportunities.**

**Protection of our national resources that constitute part of our business heritage as we have come a long way in building up a Jordanian business identity that is unique to our small country in the Middle East.**

**While Jordan is becoming an active partner in the peacekeeping project, the Jordanian private sector must shoulder its responsibility in safeguarding Jordan's national security.**

**scale of buildings a better Jordan and standing up to the challenge in the world of business today and in the future.**

**Jordanians should appreciate the work of young, professional, businesspeople, a handful of whom have succeeded in penetrating the world markets as internationally-recognized software developers. To develop themselves, they have made very dear capital and labor investments to keep up with the new prevailing trends in the world of computer technology.**

**There is also a handful of reputable Jordanian computer houses that, in addition to representing international brand names and trade marks, have succeeded in building an independent Jordanian character in developing Arabized, customized, and tailor-made software and information technology services.**

**We can all agree that there is an emerging 'Jordanian value-added' sector in computerization and information technology that needs to be heavily safeguarded and closely monitored.**

**Protecting international names so as to attain a high-profile and to attract**

**more customers is an old game. The Jordanian technology community does not appreciate any act of intellectual property rights piracy. In other words, the illegal transfer of ownership or title of foreign trade or service marks and names does not create more business and results in creating a bad image of business ethics in this strategic sector of the Jordanian market.**

**Due to the increasing local and international competition in offering international technology services, only a few businesses, recognized locally and internationally as 'good', will be able to carry on. Others will fail as is usually the case all over the world.**

**The Jordanian computer community supports every measure that seeks to protect local and international intellectual property rights. The way to doing 'smart-business' and to survival is to be innovative, create, develop and add value to what we have acquired or produced. Smart-business making has never been associated with piracy and bad business ethics.**

## Jardaneh says black economy is limited

**AMMAN (Star)—The black economy seems to have become an irritating phenomenon in the Jordanian economy, to an extent that deputy Dr Nazeeh Ammarin raised the issue at the Lower House, and requested an explanation from the Ministry of Finance. Mr Basil Jardaneh replied by saying that while the Ministry is persistent in the measures it takes to restrict such activities, it believes that the most effective way to combat this will be through the people's confidence and satisfaction with the tax and customs system, and the discretion and wisdom of the monetary and financial authorities.**

**Jardaneh went on to define what a black economy is by saying that it is the total income realized, without the related added value, in the national accounts. He explained that this includes the unregistered income and illegal economic activities, such as the forms of smuggling, dealing with prohibited goods (drugs and unlicensed arms), bribes and corruption, and the 'secret deposits' which are kept to avoid taxes.**

**Nevertheless, Jardaneh**



Jardaneh

**who employ foreign workers illegally to escape paying the fees of the work permit. Such a practice implies a distortion of the actual size of migrant workers in the country. He even spoke about real estate dealers who register lands and buildings sold or bought at a lower value so as not to pay the real tax and registration fees.**

**However, Jardaneh pointed out that the size of the black economy is arguable. He pointed out that such an assessment is carried within that of the national economy. But the methodology in this assessment is also disputed, and the necessary statements are missing. Hence, all estimates are arbitrary. But in comparison with the industrial countries, the black economy phenomena in Jordan is limited, the Minister said.**

**He confirmed that the Government is taking all the necessary measures to deter the development of this. It especially fights against all forms of smuggling in cooperation with regional and international trafficking bodies. Meanwhile, the Government has established special local committees**

## Business Chronicle

### New challenges and promising opportunities

**The peace process has generated new challenges and promising opportunities for the economies of the Middle East, said Hamdi Tabba', Chairman of the Businessmen Association (JBA).**

**In the first place, there is the expected economic openness among these countries. This requires the promotion of the quality of our production so that it would stand up to competition. This means that new export prospects are also envisaged, he added.**

**Mr Tabba' said that the peace process needs prerequisites if it is to deepen its roots and continue to exert efforts to reconstruct the Palestinian economy, following the many years of destruction and disorder. He explained that as Jordanian-Palestinian relations have deep historical roots, their economies naturally assume a complementary character. Hence, he said, he believes that this is a promising opportunity and a challenge which necessitates attention and care for the realization of the two peoples' common aspirations.**

**Mr Tabba' pointed out that the expansion of the regional peace circle by the inclusion of other nations will contribute to the change and development of outlook of foreign investors towards the region.**

**He explained that in past years, the area was unstable and lacked security and Arab and foreign capital refrained from investing in it. However, under the new conditions, the future looks promising for investment, especially as there exist many possibilities which have been previously exploited. This is to say nothing of the expansion of the region's markets.**

**The second challenge lies in the increasing tendency towards cooperation between the states of the region, Tabba' noted. He said such cooperation is inevitable because of the many joint projects that are likely to occur through the conclusion of trade accords which would reformulate the former economic alliances and structures on new basis, concepts, and dimensions. Tabba' is confident that with its geography, economic rehabilitation, and improved investment climate, Jordan will be able to benefit from these.**

**The third challenge, which emerged during the preparation for the Amman Economic Summit last October, is the active and effective partnership between the public and private sectors in Jordan. He stressed that the continuation of such a partnership is desired and required, in view of the role that is expected to be played by the private sector in the coming era. Hence, Tabba' called on the Government to address the private sector in a new spirit by bringing it closer to the decision-making process. He demanded the end of bureaucratic red tape which is detrimental to investor mobility.**

**Tabba' drew the attention to a number of economic and political changes that are taking place around the world, and have a clear impact on Jordan. Among others, he mentioned the giant economic blocs, accelerating technological development, and the political and economic alliances and groupings that are being formed in the Middle East.**



Tabba'

## New ratings for Gulf Bank from IBCA

**LONDON: IBCA, the European credit rating agency, has assigned a long-term rating of BBB+ to the Gulf Bank K.S.C. A short-term rating of A2 has also been assigned.**

**The Gulf Bank K.S.C. is the second largest bank in Kuwait with a strong position in the domestic retail banking sector. The bank's performance in recent years has been good and it is strongly capitalised. The long-term rating follows IBCA's recent assignment of an A rating for the Kuwait, the first sovereign rating for any Gulf state.**

**to monitor and assess the value of land and real estates around the Kingdom. Positive results have been realized to the state's treasury. Land registration fees were JD 44.1 million in 1992; JD 49.4 million in 1993; and JD 52.5 million in 1994, whereas the sold immovable properties were worth JD 655 million, JD 718 million; and JD 728 million respectively.**

**The Minister added that the Government's wise monetary policies also aim at filling the gap between prices at home and in foreign markets, especially in the reduction of customs on many commodities. This has led to the reduction of the state's customs revenues from JD 229.7 million in 1992 to JD 216.8 million in 1994 and even to JD 97.1 million in the first half of 1995.**

**Assets of the CBJ amounted in January '96 to JD 3,288,108,283 (with an increase of JD 100 million over its assets in December '95). The CBJ monthly bulletin shows that the Bank's assets amounted to JD 138,905,157 in gold and JD 1,085,300,033 in convertible currencies in January '96. The CBJ's assets in the dinar amounted to 404,174,910 in January in governmental bonds and securities, and 638,122,449 dinars as discount advances. The bulletin also shows that current accounts and deposits in foreign exchanges for licensed banks amounted to JD 771,077,863, and JD 53,954,900 in certificates of deposits for these banks, in addition to JD 154,280,398 worth of other valuables.**

## MARKET WATCH

27-30 January

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY	
↑ %	↓ %	↑ %	↓ %	↑ %	↓ %	↑ %	↓ %
Arab Investment Bank	2.63	Jordan Gulf Insurance	3.77	Industry Develop Bank	4.47	Holy Land Insurance	5.26
Irbid Power	1.59	Int'l Textile Manufacture	1.89	Alraya Pharmacy	4.05	Irbid Power	4.69
Tajem	1.41	Financial Investment Union	1.22	Jordan Trade	2.60	Arab Potash	1.83
Arab Trade & Investment	4.69	Jordan Bank	5.00	National Financial	4.32	Rafaya Plastic	4.44
Arab Investment Bank	3.70	Jordan Rock Woolen	3.06	Phosphate Mines	2.46	Poultry & Live Stock	3.57
Philadelphia Bank	2.96	Middle East Pharm.	2.63	Jordan Pipe Industry	1.79	Modern Cable	1.52
General Price Pointer	153,410		152,488		152,570		153,410
Trade Volume	256489		934865		409494		569853
Stock Volume	180857		494576		245580		37058
Highest Traded Stocks							
Cement Factory	44,346	Gulf Bank	208,421	Jordan Trade	54,980	Arab Bank	88,280

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646868 Fax: 646949



"You're getting warm... warmer... warmer..."



# AROUND TOWN

● Among a large circle of relatives and friends, Khaled, Zaher and Fida'a Al Abed celebrated their wedding on 12 January 1996. The newly-weds have taken up their residency in the US state of Virginia where the groom has been residing for some time. We wish them all the best and a long and happy life together.



## Etching and Illustrations

By Eyad Ammari  
Special to the Star

AN EXHIBITION of Print-making and Painting, by the Jordanian artist Yasser Dweik, at Darat Al-Funun (Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation), opened on Thursday, January 18, 1996. On display are thirty-five works, ten of which are oil on canvas and the rest are various multi-media etchings.



Entangled Lines I

The etchings of Dweik are of superior quality, as he uses different media including brass, zinc, plaster, and mixed media. The rich structure of the works is striking, even to someone who is not a connoisseur of this art form. He concentrates on surface attractiveness, using various ornamentation objects, as well as regular and irregular shapes, thus creating works of more emphasis on composition than subject matter. He also has several illustrative presentations, most notably the works *Three Fish*, and *A Fall*.

In the etchings that are not done in mixed media, Dweik uses little tonal gradation, although with monochromatic hues to create his subjects and simple compositions. In the mixed media works, color shifts are sudden, and strong, not too dynamic and not too flat. Defined figures are created by subtle lines, whether with or without the effect of colors that are favourably bold. In *Entangled Lines I* and *Entangled Lines II*, the shapes are easily defined, illustrative in approach, and colors shift suddenly, while *From the Inspira-*

tion of the Past is an example of a piece of distinct colors that are related by a common medium, a base of varying blues with quasi-triangular shapes that connect all the sides of the work.

The oil paintings of Dweik do not rise up to the level of his etchings. From their concepts and style, they seem to stem from a totally different time than the etchings. They lacked color sophistication, especially when compared to the etchings. The composition is not given any attention and the color assimilation is weak. At first, one would think that they are the works of some other artist altogether. Only after looking at their numbers and names, one realizes that it is the same artist. What is strange is that Darat Al Funun actually displayed the works at all.

Dweik graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts of Baghdad in 1968. Currently he is teaching art in the United Arab Emirates. He had eight personal exhibitions in Jordan, one in London and one in U.A.E. He is also a recipient of the 1976 Alexandria Biennale award. The exhibition lasts until February 18. ■



The Fall

## Rotary delegation visits Jordan



A ROTARY INTERNATIONAL delegation headed by vice-president Richard Slager was in Jordan last week as part of a regional visit. Mr. Slager presented His Majesty King Hussein with the Rotary International Special Award in appreciation of His Majesty's contributions to Middle East peace. Her Majesty Queen Noor also received an award in appreciation of her contributions to social development and mother and child health services.

During his stay, Mr. Slager held a press conference in which he explained the nature and goals of the organization. Rotary International is an organization of business and professional men and women united worldwide. Harnessing the collective power of their personal and professional talents and resources, Rotarians work to strengthen their communities, provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help spread goodwill and peace around the world. Slager said that there are Rotary clubs in over 194 countries around world. The clubs, he added, include 1.3 million members who share common goals.

Rotarians apply the principles of service in their personal, social, and professional lives to foster international understanding and friendship. In Jordan there are several Rotary clubs, of which the Rotary Club of Amman Cosmopolitan is the newest. It already has proven that the motto "Service Above Self" is its own reward when one works in serving others. This was clearly evident when the club's President, Wa'el Karadshet, was approached by a poor Jordanian family who was seeking financial assistance for a badly needed eye operation for their eight year old son.

When advised of the family's plight, the Cosmopolitan club members felt this was a worthwhile project and immediately investigated ways of assisting the family. Russian Ambassador, Alexander Salfanov, an active member, contacted his government and arranged to have the operation performed in Russia. Dr. Ziad Sharafiah, another active member, was able to identify a specialist in Jordan to perform the operation. Dr. Sharafiah arranged for the young patient, Abdel Raheem Yousef to be admitted to a local hospital and the operation was successfully performed.

Abdel Raheem and his mother visited the club December 27, and expressed their appreciation to the Cosmopolitan members for making all of the hospital arrangements, and paying for the operation. Service Above Self is its own reward! ■

## Annual party for Hotel Inter. Continental Jordan staff

HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL Jordan recently held its annual staff party at the Ballroom. The party included awards for the employee of the year and the best performing departments.

Prizes included airline tickets and vacations in Europe and the Middle East. A gastronomic buffet dinner complemented the function.

General Manager Chawki Ayoub summarized the major achievement of 1995 and briefed the staff on forthcoming renovation plans and the activities for the 50th Anniversary of the Intercontinental Hotels. ■



Mr. Judeh is the Area Manager of Saudia in Jordan.

## Plan to improve tourism sector, make Jordan prime destination

By Sami Judeh

THIS PART of the world has always been a blessed land on which many cultures have prospered. Over 8,000 years, the contact between humans and nature has been very strong. Successive cultures such as the Babylonian, Nabatean, Greek, Roman and Byzantine inhabited this land and left their mark on it.

Jordan which played a significant role in the history of this region, is witnessing today rapid development in different aspects of life, including tourism. Tourism has been developing as an industry that contributes to Jordan's economy.

Following is a proposed program to activate tourism in Jordan:

1. The adoption of a policy to provide a tourism infrastructure with various facilities. The process should include the following:

a. Facilitating investments by allowing the private sector to join the Ministry of Tourism in executing tourism projects. The private sector will decrease bureaucratic red tape and keep projects in line with new developments in the tourism sector.

b. Establishing an institute for tourism education. Students in the institute get a cer-

tificate that qualifies them to work in the field of tourism. The institute should also have a training program to update the skills of professionals in the field. Studies should include history and culture among other areas.

c. Giving immediate attention to the state of tourist sites, especially the religious ones. Some places are hard to get to because of the lack of safe transportation, which needs an urgent solution.

d. Emphasizing publicity by attending international tourism exhibitions and holding an annual local exhibition, the participants of which will have the opportunity to visit Jordan's tourist sites.

e. Focusing on the following:

c.1-Conference tourism

Every conference that is held in Amman should include a tourism program for the delegates.

c.2-Religious tourism

Jordan has many important religious sites.

c.3-Healthcare tourism

Jordan has many health resorts such as the Maqen springs, the Dead Sea and others.

c.4- Youth Tourism

Constructing budget accommodations for young visitors.

6- Consulting with experts in



tourism about official decisions related to tourism.

2. Following are the means by which the tourism industry can grow:

a. Governmental support by devoting part of the national income to tourism and tourism marketing.

b. Facilitating the issuing of visas.

c. Assure that the people in charge of the tourism sector have sufficient experience.

d. Emphasizing tourism safety.

e. Treating tourists respectfully and honestly.

3. The numbers of tourists should be increased by the fol-

lowing:

a- Organizing marketing campaigns all over the world.

b- Developing a special style in attracting tourists to return to Jordan.

c- Establishing tourism offices around Jordan.

d- Appointing tourism attaches to Jordanian embassies in countries with potential tourism markets.

e- Tourism services:

g.1- Providing special services for tourists at all tourism sites.

g.2- Providing new means of transportation to facilitate tourists' movements.

g.3- Providing different forms of entertainment.

g.4- Helping tourists feel at home through kind treatment.

This can be achieved by establishing a society of the friends of national tourism.

g.5- Offering reasonable prices in hotels and other facilities.

g.6- Providing clean facilities such as like restaurants.

g.7- Improving the sound and light systems in the most important tourism sites.

All of the above will ensure that Jordan achieves its rightful place among the most important tourism destinations of the world. ■

Mr. Judeh is the Area Manager of Saudia in Jordan.

## Green cards: an overview

PEOPLE ALL OVER the world have heard of the famous US Green Cards. This is the common term for an Alien Registration Receipt Card. Years ago, the cards were actually green in color. Then, they were red, white and blue, while today Green Cards are pink.

Many people believe that Green Cards are work permits. While a green card does give you the right to work legally in the United States, its main function is to identify the holder as a permanent US resident.

Your Green Card does not limit your ability to travel, but means that your permanent residence must be in the United States or else your card will be revoked.

The best way to improve your chances of immigration is picking the visa category that best suits you. The cornerstone of the US immigration system is a rigid group of visa categories. Your job in trying to get any type of immigration benefits is to prove that you fit into one of these categories. The Immigration Act of 1990 has established a number of new categories and made it easier to qualify in already existing ones, yet the basic system remains the same.

When you complete an application at a US consulate abroad for permanent residence, you do not get a Green Card

immediately. First you are issued an immigrant visa. You must then use it within four months to enter the United States and claim your Green Card. If you do not act during that time, the immigrant visa will expire and your right to a Green Card will be lost.

Once you receive the card, there are only two conditions required to keep it for life. First, you must not become deportable. The most common way of becoming so is to be convicted of a serious crime.

The second requirement is that you do not abandon the US as your permanent residence. Residence, for immigration purposes, is a question of intent. Should you travel out of the country and you do not plan to make your home somewhere else, then legally you are still a US resident.

If you have a Green Card and leave the United States for more than a year, your card may be in jeopardy, as the INS feels an absence of longer than a year indicates a possible abandonment of US residence. Even if you return before the year is up, it may not be enough. It is a common misconception that to keep your Green Card all you need to do is enter the United States at least once a year. If you ever leave with the intention

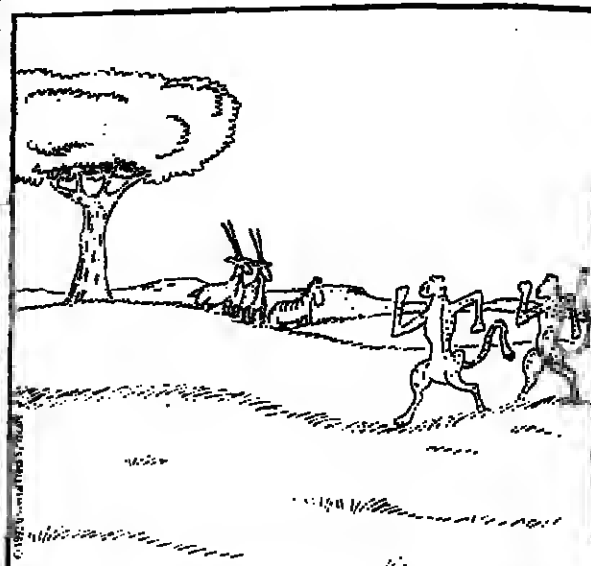
of making some other country your permanent home, you give up your US residency. The INS will look for signals that your real place of residence is not the United States.

Remaining outside the United States for more than one year does not mean you have automatically given up your Green Card. If your absence was intended from the start to be only temporary, you may still keep your permanent residence. Staying away for more than one year does mean, however, that you may no longer use your Green Card as a US entry document. In this situation, you must either apply at a US consulate for a special immigrant visa as a returning resident or you must get what is known as a re-entry permit.

If you have a re-entry permit, the INS can allow you to stay away for up to two years, but you should apply for this privilege before leaving. If the application is approved, a re-entry permit will be issued. The permit proves that your absence from the United States is not an abandonment of residence. It also serves as an entry document when you are ready to return. Re-entry permits cannot be renewed and can be applied for only inside the United States. ■

## THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



Alert, but far from panicked, the herbivores studied the sudden arrival of two cheetah speedwalkers.



Rusty makes his move.



In the rodent family, the beaver is king of the busy signal.



"For crying out loud! Look at this place! ... Well, this is one little Satanic ritual that's coming to an end!"

## AGENDA

### Films

■ A soldier's story at the American Center, today Thursday, 1 February at 2 pm.

■ Videos on Islam and Ramadan in the US at the American Center on Sunday 4 February at 2 pm.

■ *Milou en Mai* at the French Cultural Center on Monday 5 February, at 8 pm.

■ Little Bear's trousers & other stories and The Snowman (both for children aged 3-6) at the British Council on Tuesday, 6 February at 5 pm.

■ Prime Suspect at the

British Council on Wednesday, 7 February at 7 pm.

### Exhibitions

■ Print-making and Painting exhibition by Jordanian artist Yasser Dweik, at Darat Al Funun continuing until 18 February.

■ Plastic (abstract) art exhibition by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at Orfali Art Gallery until 6 February.

### Jazz evening

■ A jazz evening will take place at the American Center on Tuesday 6 February at 6 pm.

**1 FEBRUARY 1996**

**THE STAR**

**Program from**

**PROGRAM**

**THURSDAY**

4:00 - V...

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5:00 - N...

5:30 - M...

6:00 - H...

6:30 - R...

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**CROSSWORD PUZZLE**

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# The Star's TV GUIDE

Programs on JTV from 3-9 Feb.



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## ENGLISH PROGRAM

### SATURDAY

2:00—Moomins  
2:30—Wish Kid  
3:00—Harry And The Hendersons  
3:25—Blue Heelers  
4:00—Voyagers  
4:30—French Programs  
5:00—News Headlines  
5:30—Major Dad  
6:00—The Stamp of Greatness  
6:25—Hawaii Five-O  
6:50—The Glass Virgin  
7:00—News at Ten  
7:25—A Journey Across The Land Of Islam  
7:45—Feature Film: *In A Stranger's Hand*, starring: Robert Ulrich & Morgan Gallagher  
A stolen child... A desperate woman... A deadly conspiracy  
11:50—Mancuso FBI

### SUNDAY

2:00—The Flintstones  
2:30—Disney's Aladdin  
2:50—Family Playhouse  
3:30—Islamic History In Jordan  
4:00—Voyagers  
4:30—French Programs  
5:00—News Headlines  
5:30—Are You Being Served  
6:00—Oriental Rugs  
6:25—Hawaii Five-O  
6:50—Cinema, Cinema  
7:30—Women of the World  
8:00—News at Ten  
8:25—Counterstrike  
11:15—The American Chart Show  
12:00—Stay Lucky

### MONDAY

2:00—Bonkers  
2:30—Richie Rich  
3:00—Playabout  
3:15—Bustin Loose  
3:40—Animals of the Mediterranean

4:00—Voyagers  
5:00—French Programs  
7:30—News Headlines  
7:35—McHale's Navy  
8:00—Inventions  
8:25—Hawaii Five-O  
9:10—Russia: The Missing Years  
10:00—News at Ten  
10:25—A Journey Across The Land Of Islam  
10:40—Perfect Scoundrels  
11:10—Taurus Rising  
12:00—Ellen

### TUESDAY

2:00—Captain Planet  
2:30—Jonny Quest  
2:50—Spirit of Adventure  
3:40—Scientific Eye  
4:30—Voyagers  
5:00—French Programs  
7:30—News Headlines  
7:35—You Bet Your Life  
8:00—Oriental Rugs  
8:25—Hawaii Five-O  
9:10—Harry  
10:00—News at Ten  
10:25—Three Sovereigns For Sarah  
11:15—Feature Film: *Psycho*, starring: Anthony Perkins & John Gavin  
A psycho freak kills his mother and her lover... he even goes further when trying to get rid of the evidence...

### WEDNESDAY

2:00—The Flintstones  
2:30—Speed Racer  
3:00—Islamic History In Jordan  
3:30—Islamic Antiquities In Jordan  
4:00—Voyagers  
4:30—French Programs  
7:30—News Headlines  
7:35—Evening Shade  
8:00—Oriental Rugs  
8:25—Hawaii Five-O  
9:10—Horizon/ Too Big, Too Soon  
10:00—News at Ten



Elizabeth Taylor in *Boom*, Friday at 11:45

10:25—Airwolf  
11:20—The Silk Road  
12:30—Second Thoughts

### THURSDAY

1:00—Fireman Sam  
1:10—Disney's Aladdin  
1:30—The Legends Of Treasure Island  
2:00—My Secret Identity  
2:15—NBA  
3:15—The new leave it to Beaver  
3:40—Adventures Of The Old West  
4:30—Gillette World Sport  
5:00—French Programs  
7:30—News Headlines  
7:35—Carol And Company  
8:00—Magazine 81  
8:15—The Album Show  
9:10—Pride And Prejudice  
10:00—News At Ten  
10:25—A Journey Across The Land Of Islam

10:45—Feature Film: *Sharpe's Eagle*, starring: Sean Bean & Brian Cox  
12:00—Matlock

### FRIDAY

1:00—The Little Mermaid  
1:30—Iris the happy professor  
1:40—Bush School  
2:00—See How They Grow  
2:15—Lift Off  
2:35—Futures  
2:50—Movies, Games And Videos  
3:20—Goldrush in Alaska  
4:05—Wonder Why  
4:30—Give Us A Clue  
5:00—French Programs  
7:30—News Headlines  
7:35—Short Story Cinema  
8:00—Sea Quest  
8:45—America's Funniest People  
9:10—Widows  
10:00—News at Ten

10:25—Second Chances  
11:45—Classic Movie: *Boom*, starring: Elizabeth Taylor & Richard Burton  
The story of a sick wealthy woman who got married six times... she is taken back by the visit of poet "Angel of Death"

## PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

### SAMEDI

5:00—Documentaire  
«Du soleil et du vent»  
5:30—Série  
Les compagnons de l'aventure  
«Les mégacêtres et l'énigme du sphynx»  
6:00—Série  
Château Vallon  
7:00—Le journal  
7:15—Magazine  
Faut pas rêver  
«Mongolie»

### DIMANCHE

5:00—Documentaire  
Azimut  
5:30—Série  
Les compagnons de l'aventure  
«Les mégacêtres: l'énigme sans feu»  
6:00—Magazine  
Envoyé spécial  
«J. Diuron et moi»  
«Le passage»  
7:00—Le journal  
7:15—Magazine  
Sports et musique

### LUNDI

5:00—Documentaire  
«L'enfant du saule»  
5:30—Série  
Les compagnons de l'aventure  
«Les mégacêtres: méduse de tunisie»  
5:50—Magazine  
C'est pas sorcier

6:20—Divertissement  
L'école des fans  
«Herbert Leonard»  
7:00—Le journal  
7:15—Magazine  
Cinq sur cinq

### MARDI

5:00—Documentaire  
Montagne  
«Au pays de la rivière bleue»  
5:30—Série  
Les compagnons de l'aventure  
«Lola et les sardines»  
6:00—Magazine médicale  
Savoir plus santé  
«Vaincre la surdité»  
7:00—Le journal  
7:15—Magazine  
Ushuaia

### MERCREDI

5:00—Documentaire  
«Le magreb face à la désertification»  
5:30—Série  
Les dames de la côte  
7:00—Le journal  
7:15—Magazine  
Sports et musique

### JEUDI

5:00—Documentaire  
«A la poursuite d'une ligne»  
5:30—Variétés  
Le monde est à vous  
«Hervé Villard»  
7:00—Le journal  
7:15—Magazine  
Archimède  
«Merveilles sous-marines»

### VENREDI

5:00—Magazine  
E-M6  
5:30—Téléfilm  
«Le fils de Casconge»  
7:00—Le journal  
7:15—Magazine  
Allo la Terre?  
«La glace»

Programs are subject to change by JTV



## Cinema

**"BEASTMASTER III: THE EYE OF BRAXUS"**  
(MCA/Universal, ). Marc Singer returns as the warrior in this made-for-video sequel to the earlier sword-and-sorcery adventures, the first of which is a cable-TV perennial. Sandra Hess (*"Encino Man"*) plays his female comrade in battle; also appearing are former *"Beverly Hills 90210"* semi-regular Casper Van Dien and Tony Todd (*"Candyman"*). \*\* (PG-13: AS, P, V)

**"SEPARATE LIVES"** (Vidmark, ). Previously teamed in *"Mr. Destiny"*, James Belushi and Linda Hamilton are reunited in a darker tale with this melodrama, in which the actress plays a psychology professor who asks a police detective to keep watch over her. He discovers that she has a nighttime alter ego... and when she ultimately becomes a murder suspect, his feelings for her cloud his objectivity. \*\* (R: AS, P, V)

**"HOLD OVER: 'DIE HARD WITH A VENGEANCE'"**  
(Fox, ). Bruce Willis is back in action with the third installment of the action series, forcing his police-detective character John McClane into a battle of wits with an enemy (Jeremy Irons) who has a personal grudge against him. The villain targets various New York City sites for destruction, while McClane gets help from a reluctant shopkeeper (Samuel L. Jackson). \*\*\* (R: P, V)

**"CLUELESS"** (Paramount, \$97.52): Amy Heckerling, the director who defined 1980s youth with *"Fast Times at Ridgemont High"*, does much the same for their 1990 counterparts with this entertaining comedy. Alicia Silverstone became a true star by playing the seemingly savvy young lady who dispenses counsel to her female friends on what's "in" and not; co-stars include Stacey Dash and Breckin Meyer. \*\*\* (PG-13: AS, P)

**"THE LAND BEFORE TIME III: THE TIME OF THE GREAT GIVING"** (MCA/Universal, ). As with the second tale in what has become a series of full-length, animated features, this latest installment was produced expressly for the home-video market. The young dinosaur Littlefoot and his friends try to rectify a water shortage in the Great Valley where they live, before adults battle for the little supply left. \*\* (G)

**COMING SOON: "THE NET"** (Columbia/TriStar, Jan. 9): Sandra Bullock plays an expert computer hacker drawn into danger by a mysterious stranger (Jeremy Northam). (PG-13)

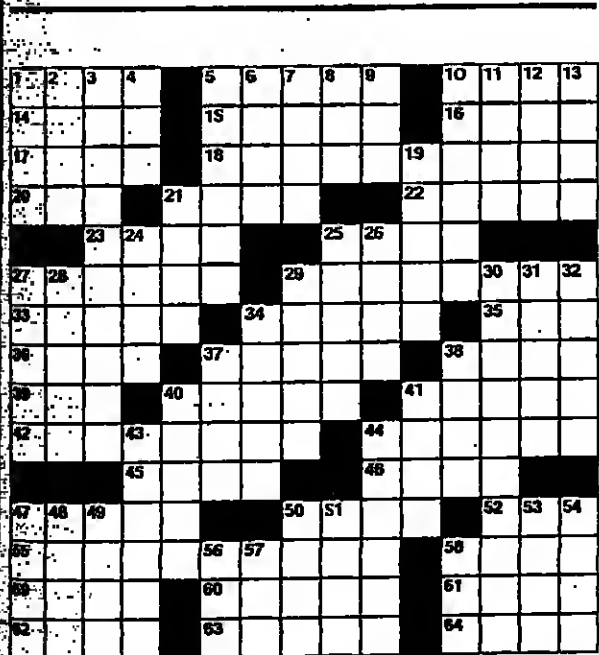
**"NINE MONTHS"** (Fox, Jan. 16): Hugh Grant plays a child psychologist panicked by the prospect of having his own baby; Julianne Moore and Tom Arnold co-star. (PG-13)

**"JADE"** (Paramount, Jan. 23): Linda Fiorentino plays the lady who stirs up trouble between David Caruso and Chazz Palminteri in director William Friedkin's melodrama. (R)

**FAMILY-VIEWING GUIDE KEY:** AS, adult situations; N, nudity; P, profanity; V, violence; GV, particularly graphic violence.

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## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



**ACROSS**  
1 A Star  
5 Challenges  
10 The old  
14 Golf club  
15 Soap plant  
16 Telenovela  
17 Zone  
18 Part of TLC  
20 My Gal  
21 Cereals  
22 Spiky  
23 Ethiopian opera  
25 Indochina language  
27 Persons in a way  
28 Keyboard performers  
33 Join together  
34 Worth  
35 Upright group: abbr.  
38 Ages  
39 Small valley  
40 Soft drinks  
41 Rescued  
42 Practicing abstinence  
44 Two-toed animals  
45 Czar  
46 Cash river  
47 Winged  
50 Church area  
51 Stifle  
52 Bed dreams  
58 Tractable  
59 Loyal  
60 Express an idea  
61 God of war  
62 Beginning  
63 Necklace components  
64 Bias  
65 Apron parts  
66 Surface  
67 Knock down  
68 Explosive  
69 Texas town  
70 Hebrew prophet  
71 Wander  
72 A Whitney  
73 Japanese money  
74 1203  
75 Too bad  
76 Very scarce  
77 Pitcher  
78 Carry oil films  
79 English statesman  
80 Chills and fever  
81 Musical composition  
82 Hang fire  
83 Prayer's end  
84 Remainder  
85 Unruly group  
86 Mimic  
88 Slight flap

## —THIS WEEK'S— HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

**Weekly Tip:** Quick thinking will be required to keep up with the competition. You'll have to be really sharp to get ahead.

**Aries (March 21-April 19).** Take an extra job if it's offered, to make extra money. A disagreement with a friend could flare up.

**Taurus (April 20-May 20).** You're lucky. Launch your projects for the year, by listing them. Try something tough; you're strong.

**Gemini (May 21-June 21).** You may not feel like doing much. There's one task you shouldn't forget, though. Push yourself.

**Cancer (June 22-July 22).** Call a bureaucrat before you fill out official forms, to make sure you're doing it correctly. You'll be strong.

**Leo (July 23-Aug. 22).** You may find an older person frustrating. Just do the job as it's been assigned.

**Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** You're very lucky, so take on a challenge this year. Follow orders but mention it if there's a planning error.

**Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** If you need a loan, talk to an older relative about it. A chance encounter with a foreigner could lead to an interesting opportunity.

**Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Take constructive criticism in good humor. It can help you improve your presentation.

**Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Too bad if you have a headache. There's work to be done that can't be put off any longer! An argument could lead to an improvement.

**Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** Hopefully, you can take some time off. It's perfect weather for cuddling with your sweetheart. You can catch up on your workload later.

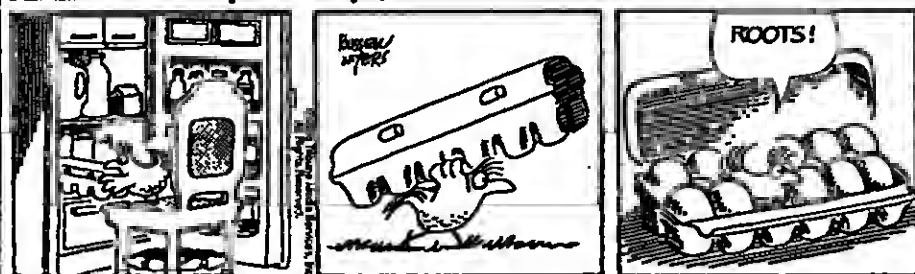
**Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** A younger person may develop a crush on you! Keep the relationship strictly intellectual, unless otherwise appropriate.

**Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20).** Take some quiet time for yourself. It'll help you relax, and solve a persistent problem. A chatterbox at home could get on your nerves. Listen politely, and that person will think you're wonderful.

**If You're Having a Birthday This Week:** You're lucky in love this year. Make a commitment you can build upon. Learn how to express yourself clearly this year, and you'll achieve great things.

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PERKY & BEANZ by Russell Myers



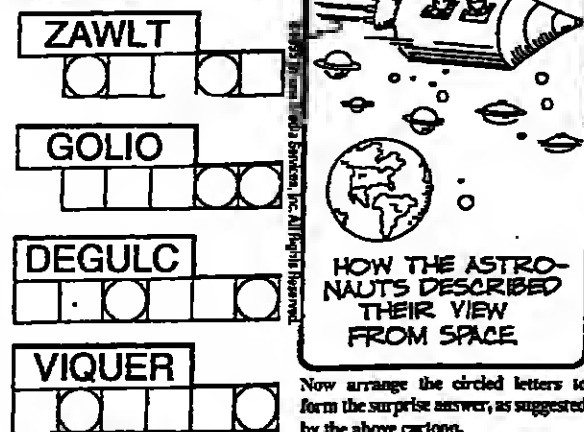
ELWOOD by Ben Templeton & Tom Forman



CATFISH by Fred Wagner & Tom Cone



Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Answer here: **WATZ, GILLO, CUDGEL, QUITTER**  
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoons.

## WORD WISE

**Q:** I found what I think was a mistake in my local newspaper the other day. The writer wrote "wreck havoc." Isn't it wreck havoc?

**A:** You are correct. Wreck means to aveoge, to

## Words of Wisdom

Ignoring a problem only makes the solution twice as expensive.

Don't be as concerned by others' behavior as much as your own.

Too much talk about tomorrow indicates an unwillingness to take action today.

Those who like to snipe at people behind their backs are afraid of confrontation. Confronting them will make them stop.

Big secrets and big mouths don't go well together.

Living well makes it easier to ignore the follies of others.

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## Bridge

Only at Matchpoints

By Tannah Hirsch

Both vulnerable. North deals.

### NORTH

♠ 10 7 5 2  
♥ A Q 6 4  
♦ 10 3  
♣ A Q 9

### EAST

♠ K J 8  
♥ 10 8 5  
♦ Q 8 7 2  
♣ 6 4 3

### SOUTH

♠ A Q 4  
♥ K 7 2  
♦ J 9 6  
♣ J 10 8 2

The bidding:

North	East	South	West
1♠	Pass	1♦	Pass
1NT	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead: Nine of ♠

When it seems that nothing else will succeed, try a dash of guile. You might be surprised by the result.

Since the jump to two no trump was invitational in North-South's methods, North's raise was a distinct stretch. However, every card was right and all suits were destined to break favorably so, after a spade lead, declarer should have been able to take 10 tricks on this hand from a pair event. But see what a little false-carding can do.

West led a top-of-nothing spade, dummy played low, but East nevertheless inserted the jack. Declarer's queo won and the jack of clubs was led, covered by the king and won with the ace. Declarer called for a low spade, and East continued the deception by producing the king!

South, hungry for overtricks, could not divine the heart division, but one thing seemed sure: West still had 8 6 in spades in front of dummy's 10 7, and a fourth spade trick was there for the taking. It seemed right to cash the spades with the help of the "marked" finesse and see who discarded what.

When declarer led the four of spades to the six and seven, the roof fell in. East stole the eight of spades and it was not difficult to find the diamond switch — down one.

There might or might not be a moral in this for duplicate players. All we can think is that, since not too many pairs would get to game on a combined 23 count, we would have taken the nine sure tricks — four clubs, three hearts and two spades — and in the process made an overtrick. At rubber bridge, the kindest thing that can be said about declarer's play is that there must have been a full moon!

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## SLAPSTIX

**"Losing your head makes it hard to save face!"**

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# Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

## Arafat demande l'aide de la Suède

Yasser Arafat (notre photo) a déclaré mardi qu'il souhaitait que la Suède joue un rôle de médiateur dans les prochaines négociations sur l'avenir de Jérusalem. Pour lui, l'ancien ministre suédois des affaires étrangères, Sten Andersson, doit faire partie des médiateurs chargés de la question de Jérusalem ou du retour des réfugiés.

«Nous avons besoin de votre aide, et je le dis ouvertement», a déclaré Yasser Arafat après avoir rencontré le premier ministre suédois Ingvar Carlsson. Ingvar Carlsson n'a pour l'instant pas donné de réponse à Yasser Arafat. Son conseiller diplomatique, Lars Danielsson, a précisé que «l'engagement, suédois dans ces négociations est possible si telle est la volonté des deux parties. Depuis longtemps, le gouvernement suédois se tient à leur disposition.»



## Irak

# La faim continue de tuer en silence

Selon l'Organisation de l'Onu pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture (FAO), l'embargo imposé à l'Irak a déjà entraîné la mort de 560 000 enfants. Un chiffre qui ne cesse de grossir jour après jour.

**Abbas fit** quelques pas mais ses jambes le trahirent et il s'écroula sur le sol. «Je n'ai pas mangé depuis plusieurs jours», dit-il d'un ton plein d'amertume. Abbas est l'un de ces millions d'enfants irakiens qui souffrent des effets de l'embargo imposé à leur pays depuis août 1990 par les Nations Unies. Depuis cinq ans, soit presque la moitié de sa vie, il endure des épreuves psychologiques et économiques.

«La faim tue les innocents», dit son père. «Comme je ne pouvais plus subvenir aux besoins de toute la famille, j'ai dû les répartir en groupes, chaque membre ne recevant qu'un seul repas par jour.»

Le drame est encore plus accablant lorsqu'on sait que cette famine et cette malnutrition frappent un pays qui, jusqu'à un passé récent, était parmi les plus avancés des pays en voie de développement dans le domaine de la santé et celui de l'éducation. A présent, «les gens en sont réduits à mendier pour se procurer de la nourriture», selon un responsable des Nations Unies.

«Les signes de malnutrition sont facilement détectables, surtout auprès de la population jeune», explique le docteur Rifa'i Aziz, qui travaille pour Unicef. «Les gens parlent des prix excessifs des aliments et de la valeur du dinar irakien qui ne cesse de se dégrader. Ce qui signifie que soit ils achètent des quantités minimes de nourriture, soit ils réduisent le nombre de repas. Les rations alimentaires subventionnées et distribuées par le gouvernement satisfont à peine les besoins quotidiens d'une famille irakienne de classe moyenne.»

A la suite de l'embargo, le gouvernement a rationné la distribution alimentaire. En conséquence, chacun avait droit à un panier de denrées achetées à des prix fortement subventionnés. Selon un porte-parole de l'Unicef, toute la population, à l'exception de la population autonome du nord, était bénéficiaire de ce système. Ce mécanisme avait certainement permis de tenir en échec la famine auprès des couches les plus démunies.

Mais vers la fin de septembre 1994, ces rations ont été réduites, notamment en raison de mauvaises récoltes. Elles ont atteint le niveau de 1770 calories par personne par jour, ce qui représente 70% du besoin énergétique quotidien d'un adulte.

Le seul moyen de combler ce déficit est d'avoir recours au marché libre. Mais là, les prix sont hors de portée pour la grande majorité des familles. D'où l'état de malnutrition qui frappe les enfants, situation prédictée par les missions de la FAO en Irak au cours de 1993, et qui continue de se dégrader.

**Un retour en arrière**

Le salaire moyen d'un fonctionnaire de l'Etat a été relevé, entre 1990 et 1994, de 100%. Mais ce pouvoir d'achat reste en dessous du niveau des prix des produits alimentaires, des prix qui ont augmenté de 650% entre mi-1994 et 1993.

De plus, le chômage galopant, l'approvisionnement alimentaire sporadique, et les conditions sanitaires peu salubres ont contribué à la dégradation de l'état de santé des habitants, les enfants étant particulièrement touchés. Les hôpitaux et les cliniques sont occupés de plus en plus par des enfants souffrant de marasme, du syndrome de Kwashiorkor, d'avitaminose ou de rachitisme. A cela s'ajoutent les cas de plus en plus fréquents de nouveaux-nés dont le poids est inférieur à la moyenne.

Les produits subventionnés distribués par l'Etat ne permettent pas de tenir au-delà de la première quinzaine du mois. Un très petit nombre de gens arrivent à subvenir à leurs besoins alimentaires pendant trois semaines, grâce aux légumes et au poulet qu'ils achètent sur le

marché libre. Un poulet ou bien un plateau d'œufs y coûte 1000 dinars irakiens. Le salaire d'un fonctionnaire oscille lui entre 3000 et 4000 dinars.

Pour faire face à cette situation, le Programme alimentaire mondial et le Ministère irakien de la Santé ont créé des centres de réhabilitation alimentaire à travers le pays. Leur objectif est de fournir une thérapie alimentaire aux enfants de moins de cinq ans hospitalisés pour malnutrition aggravée et de leur assurer un suivi alimentaire après leur sortie de l'hôpital ou à la fin de leur thérapie. Le projet consiste aussi à fournir une formation technique aux équipes médicales locales, ainsi qu'aux mères pour les aider à surveiller le développement de leurs enfants.

Plus de la moitié des enfants, des femmes enceintes et allaitantes sont touchés par le déficit calorifique. L'augmentation des cas graves de malnutrition conduira, à terme, à une hausse de la mortalité infantile.

Les faibles poids des enfants à la naissance, conséquence de l'état de malnutrition des femmes enceintes, ajoutés au taux élevé de maladies répandues parmi les enfants mal nourris, en seront des causes supplémentaires.

Les cas de malnutrition aboutiront certainement à l'arrêt du processus de développement chez les enfants. En outre, les carences alimentaires affecteront la croissance du cerveau chez ceux-ci avec, comme conséquence, une dégradation des facultés intellectuelles.

«La situation de la santé en Irak est en train de se détériorer très rapidement, et nous nous inquiétons des conséquences. Nous allons en arrière», avoue aujourd'hui un responsable irakien de la santé.



Les hospitalisations pour malnutrition des enfants se multiplient en Irak. Mais beaucoup d'entre eux ne sont pas soignés à temps, et on estime à 110 000 le nombre d'enfants condamnés à mourir en 1996 si la situation intérieure ne change pas.

Lima Nabli

## Elections palestiniennes

# Les Palestiniens ont voté la confiance

En votant massivement pour Yasser Arafat et les membres du Fatah, les électeurs palestiniens ont renouvelé leur confiance aux vieux militants de la cause palestinienne.

«Les balles qui m'ont rendu handicapé ne m'empêchent pas de rentrer au Conseil.» Tel était l'un des slogans d'une impressionnante manifestation à la veille des premières élections palestiniennes. C'est dire à quel point la société palestinienne était impliquée dans ce premier suffrage de l'histoire du peuple palestinien.

A Gaza, le taux de participation était de 93%, contre 75% en Cisjordanie selon la commission centrale des élections. Quant à Jérusalem, qui a posé dès le début de la campagne de gros problèmes à cause de son statut particulier et délicat, le nombre de votants ne se montait qu'à 4400 à l'intérieur de la ville. Le reste des 70 000 électeurs inscrits sur les listes électorales ont dû voter dans des bureaux situés dans les banlieues de Jérusalem, comme cela avait été convenu entre Israël et l'Autorité nationale palestinienne.

La faible participation enregistrée dans la ville sainte peut s'expliquer par l'atmosphère pesante qu'il y régnait. Le jour du scrutin, le nombre de policiers israéliens était en effet supérieur à celui des électeurs palestiniens. Ces derniers ont été pris en photo par la police israélienne, comme l'a constaté un des observateurs internationaux, l'ancien président des Etats-Unis Jimmy Carter.

Les élections se sont déroulées dans le calme et la sérénité, et aucune fraude majeure n'a été constatée par les observateurs. Des débordements étaient pourtant à craindre, ce scrutin ayant lieu quelques jours seulement après l'assassinat de Yuhia Ayash, une mort que beaucoup de Palestiniens considéraient comme une provocation.

«J'aurais préféré obtenir 51% des voix», a déclaré Yasser Arafat après l'annonce de son élection à la tête du Conseil national palestinien.

subi un échec malgré des dépenses électorales conséquentes et une campagne menée à fond de train.

Les hommes d'affaires, dont les portraits et les promesses ont envahi les journaux et les rues pendant des semaines, n'ont pas réussi à gagner la confiance de l'électorat palestinien qui est resté lucide.

De grandes figures militantes telles que le Dr Haydar Abdel Shafi ou Abdel Jawad Saleh à Ramallah ont obtenu plus de voix avec moins de moyens. Et bien que le mouvement du Fatah ait la majorité au Conseil, beaucoup de ses candidats officiels ont perdu car ils n'avaient pas l'estime de la population. C'est par exemple le cas à Gaza où seulement quatre candidats sur douze ont été élus.

Le Hamas, qui boycottait ce scrutin, peut lui compter sur cinq élus connus pour leur sympathie avec le mouvement islamiste, tout comme le FDLP, dont l'un des membres est entré dans le Conseil.

Les femmes ne disposeront pas de cinq représentations dans cette assemblée, soit environ 6% des sièges.

Le Conseil, qui se réunira après la fin du Ramadan, devra affronter une situation économique au bord du désastre.

Et sur le plan politique, il devra rapidement préparer le dossier jusqu'à la repoussée, tel que Jérusalem ou le sort des réfugiés, afin d'être prêt pour les négociations qui doivent commencer au début du mois de mai 1996.

De Gaza, Hassan Balawi



Certains candidats ont eu beau s'investir beaucoup financièrement dans cette campagne, ils n'ont pas réussi pour autant à séduire les électeurs et à obtenir un mandat au Conseil national palestinien.

national palestinien avec 88,1% des voix. Face à lui, Samiha Khalil a obtenu 9% des voix, un résultat important pour les femmes.

**L'estime plutôt que l'argent**

Ce résultat n'a surpris personne car les Palestiniens, avant de voter pour l'homme qui a permis l'autonomie, ont donné leurs voix à celui qui symbolise la lutte palestinienne de ces trente dernières années.

Ce raisonnement se retrouve dans le choix des 88 membres du Conseil national palestinien. Contrairement aux prévisions faites avant le scrutin, le réveil du tribalisme et des grandes familles de la société palestinienne n'a pas eu lieu. Les candidats des grandes familles ont

subi un échec malgré des dépenses électorales conséquentes et une campagne menée à fond de train.

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De Gaza, Hassan Balawi

## Jordanie

# Soyez au parfum des contrefaçons

Lorsque vous achetez du parfum, méfiez-vous du contenu de votre flacon. Car beaucoup de parfums sont imités, tout comme de nombreux produits copiés sur certaines grandes marques.

**Du dernier** Cacharel au nouveau Calvin Klein, les parfums s'entassent dans les petites boutiques de parfums de la basse-ville. «Nous avons tout ce que vous désirez, des marques connues aux nouveautés inimaginables», assure en souriant le vendeur d'une parfumerie. Le prix de n'importe quel flacon de 100 ml est de 6,5 dinars, soit cinq fois moins qu'un original.

En fait, ces contrefaçons sont faites à partir d'huiles essentielles importées de France, de Suisse ou d'Espagne. Elles sont ensuite mélangées avec de l'alcool et d'autres produits, avant d'être versées dans des flacons en verre de toutes tailles. Un commerce malin et fructueux.

«Il y a beaucoup de parfums «pirates» en centre-ville, dans certains magasins de beauté ou directement dans la rue», explique Ali Bakrie, vendeur dans une boutique où les parfums sont vendus dans des flacons originaux pour seulement trois ou quatre dinars. Des enfants sont effect chargés d'aller récupérer chez les gens des flacons de parfums vides et de les ramener au magasin.

Dans les grands magasins de produits de beauté, le prix des parfums originaux peut monter jusqu'à 60 ou 80 dinars, soit la moitié du salaire moyen en Jordanie. «Une minorité de 20% des gens peut acheter des parfums à un tel prix», assure Mervat Abou Ajna, vendeuse de la boutique Samco.

Les lunettes et les vêtements ne sont pas épargnés par les contrefaçons. Des milliers de copies peuvent être produites en toute légalité et se vendent sous le nom de la marque d'origine.

«La protection de la marque étrangère n'existe pas en Jordanie. Les producteurs ne peuvent pas poursuivre en justice les copieurs», assure Nidal Al-Zoubi, vérificateur des marques déposées au ministère du Com-

merce et de l'Industrie. «Seuls les acheteurs le peuvent, si les vendeurs leur vendent une contrefaçon en la faisant passer pour un produit original. La protection des marques suppose seulement pour les productions judiciaires et certaines productions arabes déposées au centre dépendant du ministère du Commerce et de l'Industrie.»

**Cassettes «pirates»**

Les produits dérivés sont donc, eux, protégés par la loi et on ne peut pas vendre leurs contrefaçons. Les grandes marques étrangères peuvent elles aussi se protéger en faisant distribuer leurs produits par des dépositaires officiels.

La notion de droits d'auteur est assez récente en Jordanie. Elle a d'ailleurs subi quelques modifications, soit deux ou trois ans pour être plus contraignante. Mais la législation n'est pas vraiment respectée dans le pays, et on trouve beaucoup de cassettes et de vidéo-cassettes

«pirates».

«A partir d'un original, il est très facile de faire des copies», explique l'ade Dolch, avocat stagiaire. «Les moyens de piratage avancent aussi vite que la technologie, et nous ne pouvons pas empêcher les copieurs de copier. Les producteurs ne peuvent pas venir en Jordanie pour courir après les copieurs.»

Quaux livres, «la protection des œuvres intellectuelles fait partie des droits de l'homme», rappelle l'ade Dolch. «C'est fin sur les droits d'auteur fait partie des avancées démocratiques du pays. L'auteur est protégé et peut poursuivre en justice les copieurs.»

Cette législation ne semble pas toutefois dissuader les pirates. Dans les nombreux magasins de photocopies, il est en effet facile de reproduire pour 5 dinars un livre de 500 pages qui coûte quatre fois plus dans le commerce.

Mona Kaddoumi



Dans certains magasins, il vaut mieux ne pas se fier à l'étiquette ou au flacon pour acheter un parfum.

## SELON

# LOI

Il n'y a rien d'étonnant à ce que les députés se disputent et échauffent les uns les autres. Les parlementaires se disputent dans le monde entier et en viennent même parfois aux mains.

Je ne connais pas les raisons d'une célèbre dispute parlementaire télévisée qui a eu lieu à Taiwan où l'on s'est battu à coup de poing et de pied, mais je suppose que les députés s'affrontaient à propos d'un problème crucial de société.

En Jordanie, et en particulier à la chambre basse, on échange toujours des points de vue différents au cours des discussions des projets de loi. Mais ces discussions aboutissent rarement à quelque chose de constructif.

Car fondamentalement, il n'y a pas de discussion ou d'analyse approfondie sur l'impact des lois sur l'avenir du pays ou le développement du royaume.

Au contraire, un quart de la chambre est toujours absent des séances. Les propositions de loi appartenant à d'autres formations politiques ne comptent pas pour la majorité, et le gouvernement ne donne aucune d'explication convaincante pour apaiser l'opposition.

Les discussions sur les projets de loi ou sur les sujets d'importance nationale sont, pour la plupart, ramenées à des problèmes linguistiques et à des dialogues ennuyeux.

On voit alors certains parlementaires tenir des conversations d'ordre privé avec leurs collègues députés ou avec certains ministres.

Et au bout d'une demi-heure, ou maximum une heure, beaucoup de députés s'en vont et il ne reste plus que le quorum au Parlement, soit 41 députés sur 80.

Les députés s'insurgent contre l'ennui de cette assemblée et l'absence de débat démocratique. La société jordanienne, malheureusement, n'est pas habituée aux pratiques démocratiques.

La façon de conduire des automobilistes illustre bien les mœurs des Jordaniens. Ils ne se respectent pas entre eux.

La solution pour les conducteurs, est de dépasser toutes les voitures en forçant le passage, en ignorant le code de la route et en ne respectant ni les piétons, ni la police.

On retrouve la même situation partout. Les disputes au Parlement sont d'ordre strictement personnel. Et même si elles s'abritent derrière des motifs politiques, elles ne relèvent que de l'intolérance des représentants du peuple entre eux, et vis-à-vis d'autres idées ou d'autres opinions.

Le respect du point de vue de l'autre et par conséquent de la liberté d'opinion ou d'expression sont des principes très difficiles à obtenir dans une telle atmosphère.

Sa'eda Kilani

## Le Jourdain, on y revient

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## THE STAR'S WORKING COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

A beginner's guide to Internet history and terminology:

# What is the Internet

THE INTERNET'S popularity is no longer confined to the USA. It has spread out all over Europe, Asia and is now in the Middle East. Everywhere, people in business, in the press and in the IT industry are talking excitedly about the Internet and the opportunities it offers them. In the middle of all the publicity, it is very easy to miss the facts you need to know to harness the Internet's vast resources.

The word 'internet' literally means 'the network of networks', a massive worldwide network of computers. The Internet is comprised of thousands of smaller regional networks scattered throughout the globe linking five million host machines and some 40 million people in over 160 countries electronically.

### History

The Internet was developed by the US military more than 25 years ago for the purpose of transferring information to remote locations. The Internet has been in use by the US government since the early 1970s, but civilian access has only been possible since the mid-eighties.

It generally refers to the physical side of the global network: the cables and computers. It does, however, include some software that routes information packets to the correct address.

### Business and the Internet

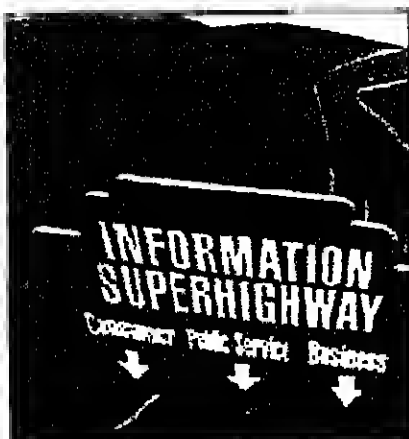
By speeding up the exchange of information between suppliers, customers and business partners worldwide, the Internet has the potential to completely change how businesses operate. Businesses who fail to adjust to the fast pace of changes the Inter-

net is introducing, could easily find themselves, in only a few years, hopelessly outdated.

In many ways, the Internet is like the telephone network. It's available to all individuals and businesses at a decreasing cost. The difference is that the Inter-

## Computer Companies:

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Web server locations can be linked. It is often referred to as a body of information or in terms of an abstract space of knowledge. The 1993 introduction of NCSA's (National Center for Super Computer Applications) Mosaic viewer transformed both the Internet and the Web from systems used primarily by education and government, into an information exchange medium for the masses and a highly effective medium for business communication.

Web browsers, such as Mosaic, provide an easy to use graphical user interface to find information quickly. According to study carried out by the Honolulu Community College in the USA, the number of users connected to the Internet on any given day doubled from roughly 15 million users in 1993 to at least 30 million in 1994.

### Internet access tools

Netscape Navigator, one of the world's leading WorldWideWeb browsers, guides you through the vast amount of information available on the Internet and gives you point-and-click access to text, graphics, sound and video.

Netscape also includes a news reader, letting you participate in any of the thousands of newsgroups on the Internet. It is fully compatible with other



## Apple suffers financial trouble, faces buyout

REPORTS COMING from Apple Computer Inc. over the last few months have provided a strong indication that the company has been suffering all sorts of problems.

It is stated that six months ago IBM, Apple's arch rival in the personal computer market, was about to purchase the company. However, the deal never came through and it seems as if it won't anymore.

Since then, Apple has suffered more losses and a tumbling stock price.

Surprisingly, the company has managed to create more growth in unit sales, selling more Macintosh systems every quarter. Yet, due to price cuts and the lower profit margin received by Apple, their have been losses.

During the last year, Apple announced that it would be licensing its operating system and a number of companies now produce Macintosh compatible systems under their own brand names. Companies like PowerComputing and DayStar have.

The Internet has been good news for Sun so far on both hardware and software ends. The company may port some of its success in this field to Apple.

In the meantime, Apple struggles to get out of its financial problems and the industry is watching as the 'rebellious

the PC market has generated.

At the moment, there is talk that Sun Microsystems may be interested in buying Apple.

Sun's takeover would mean breathing life into the PowerMacintosh brand which will serve as a central platform of personal computing in Sun's



strategy.

Currently enjoying much growth with the announcement of Java, a language for Internet authoring which is expected to have a major effect on the market, Sun is also doing well with its high power workstations.

The Internet has been good news for Sun so far on both hardware and software ends. The company may port some of its success in this field to Apple.

In the meantime, Apple struggles to get out of its financial problems and the industry is watching as the 'rebellious

success story of the last 10 years' finally seeks cover from a powerful buyer.

So, what's the fate of all those millions of Apple users out there?

Basically, they can rest assured that a well established computer brand like theirs, with a standardized operating system running on millions of systems won't simply disappear.

Software houses will continue to cater for Macintosh as long as their is a market. With the Macintosh still leading in areas like graphic design, publishing and others, it looks set to continue to be a popular machine which many a company would like to own the rights too.

At one time, over 10 percent of personal computers all over the world were Macintosh systems. That time may come again if the licensing strategy pays off and if Windows 95 from Microsoft does not create the immigration effect expected away from the Macintosh operating system.

The coming weeks will bring the Apple saga to a conclusion. It should prove to be one of the most important corporate takeovers in the computer business.

The Apple brand will live on, but in the hands of possibly less revolutionary, but more business-savvy owners. ■

## INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

### Can email replace the traditional fax?

A COUPLE of weeks ago my printer ran out of ink. As a result, I had to run around the office looking for someone else's printer everytime I needed to print out a letter or fax before sending it.

That was when I stopped to think, What am I doing? I've got a fax/modem on my PC. Isn't that supposed to effectively replace my fax?

So, I gave it a try. Not that I haven't used fax/modem before, but it's just that we've gotten used to printing our fax messages and then making a short trip to the fax machine to send them. Once sent, you clip the faxed letter to the small confirmation slip and file it. It seemed like the orderly thing to do. Besides, with electronic faxes, how can you file outgoing or even incoming ones? The answer is simple, you can.

By replacing the huge box file that occupies space on your desk with an electronic folder sitting on your hard disk, you feel like you've taken another step into the direction of the 'paperless office'.

Although I thought that I had reached the ultimate in utilizing technology to send fax messages, something else clicked.

I recalled a conversation with a sales executive at Sprint Jordan, the Internet service providing company which is yet to launch its service officially in the country. This Sprint official had told me of his prediction that email would replace the fax.

With millions of people all over the world using email everyday for personal and business purposes, it looked very clear that users were pleased with the efficiency of email, opposed to receiving a busy line signal on your fax or getting paper jams.

So, rather than continue to use Winfax software to send a Microsoft Word document, I thought that it was worth a try taking the email route.

The Bulletin Board Services I'm subscribed to, NETS and ACCESS, offer email. So, I decided to use them to send a couple of messages to some people who also subscribe to these services. But, not everyone I communicated with had used an email service. That was when the wave of progress in communications stopped for me.

It was back to the good old fax/modem which could send a message from my screen to anyone's fax machine. Not exactly as flexible as email, but an interim solution until everyone logs on.

It's interesting to think that, I didn't replace the ink cartridge on my printer. It seemed, for a couple of days, that I didn't need to go and buy one!

Still, there are other uses for a printer, like printing labels and drafting graphics on paper. Your work is never the same without it.

Following these events, it was worth thinking about the actual truth to the prediction that email may replace the fax machine.

Apparently, it can't just yet. Not in our country, now. But in the future, provided everyone adopts email as a necessary office tool, just like the fax is such a necessary tool today, it will catch on as an alternative communication method. Eventually, it probably will replace the fax, because it does save time and money. It's cheaper to send several pages of email internationally than it is to feed several papers to your fax machine. Also, it saves your time to just email something.

One day, communication with the whole world will be just the click of a button away. Until then, hold onto your fax machines. ■

## News update

### PC Business Is Booming

● The world's personal computer industry is doing a booming business. The market research firm Dataquest says the industry shipped 59.7 million PCs last year, up 24.7 percent from 1994. The industry leader continues to be Compaq, which has a 10 percent share of the market. Dataquest says IBM moved back into second place, with eight percent of the market, while Apple Computer slipped to third place, with 7.8 percent of the market. Packard Bell is No. 4, at 5.3 percent, and NEC is No. 5, at 4.8 percent.

### New Compaqs on the Way

● The largest maker of personal computers in the US is unveiling a new line in its arsenal of goods. Compaq Computer today unveiled a new roster of home multimedia PCs with features that include a combination scanner/keyboard and 'rewritable' CD-ROM drives. The Compaq Presario 7200 Series will include five

desktop models ranging in price from \$1,499 to \$2,499. The Presario 9200 Series will cost from \$1,799 to \$2,999 and is designed to appeal to multimedia and home office customers. Both models should be in stores within days.

### 95 Sales Don't Hurt Microsoft

● Windows 95 sales may have been slightly lower than expected in the latest quarter, but as Microsoft Corp.'s earnings demonstrate, that was hardly enough to slow the computer software giant. While sales of the Windows 95 operating system have fallen short of the most optimistic estimates made at the 24 August launch, the software already is installed on about 20 million computers. That makes it the most successful such upgrade in the personal computer industry's brief history. But Microsoft still faces a long-term threat from rivals focusing on the fast-growing Internet. ■

REUTERS

# Iraqis in Jordan wait mercilessly for 6 February

By Harry Pullens  
Special to The Star

AS THE Iraqi regime awaits impatiently for talks to begin in the United Nations on resolution 986—the so-called oil-for-food formula—Iraqis everywhere are upbeat about the positive socio-economic changes it may bring to their living conditions.

Since Iraq agreed weeks ago to discuss the resolution [without preconditions] with the UN, it has meant something else particularly for Iraqis living here in Jordan. The memories of home's heydays have not only become more exciting but their yearning to go back became stronger than any time since the devastating economic sanctions were imposed after the Gulf war in 1991.

Today, many are undoubtedly prepared to go home if the oil talks scheduled to begin on 6 February in New York are successful.

"Home is always the best place, it's only painful when it's no longer as accommodating as in the past. Before the Gulf War and its accompanying sanctions, I used to feel I lived in one of the most fortunate countries in the region, life was so cheap then in Iraq," says the impoverished Umm Basam, an Iraqi middle-aged woman, whose total wage that she sells in downtown amount to no more than JD 10.

"If it truly becomes a reality and we are able to sell our oil once again for at least food and medicines I will go back to Iraq immediately," she added.

Umm Basam's hopes are shared by many other Iraqi residents in Amman who talked to The Star.

In the past, Iraq has consistently rejected the 986 UN resolution that would enable it to

sell over a period of six months up to \$2 billion worth of oil.

The deal which will let Iraq buy its much needed humanitarian goods had been rejected because Iraq believed that the resolution dictates how oil is to be exported; imposes strict UN supervision on revenues; allocates some money for relief to areas in the Northern Iraq that are held by Kurdish rebel groups and pay for the Gulf war reparations.

But today, official and public optimism in Iraq, about the upcoming talks is said to be mirrored on the streets of Baghdad and other cities across the country.

Despite reports that the Iraqi authorities were enmeshed in accepting the deal by the UN Secretary-General and with France and Russia, questions have been raised by people if Iraq is willing to accept the resolution or is it just only trying to renegotiate its terms.

The oil sales which is expected to improve the condition of life across the already poverty-stricken country of 18 million people can be renewed after every six months.

Responding to these developments, Ala'a Ahmed, an Iraq college lecturer who now sells old coins at Raghadan Square in downtown said, "it would be wrong to think there is going to be any rapid or sub-



As a means of survival, Iraqi women peddle their goods on the streets of Amman

stantial changes for now, but it is likely to be a step in the right direction.

"From my last visit several months ago to Baghdad, it is most likely that things will never be the same again even if the sanctions are lifted," he lamented.

Since her defeat in 1991, things have never been the same again for Iraqis. The country today still remains under the grip of the oil embargo imposed after the Gulf War. The sanctions with the accompanying privations have reduced most Iraqis to abject poverty and leaving many displaced everywhere.

Over the years, Iraq fought in vain to win UN approval to resume oil sales—the country's lifeline. But many fac-

tors have militated against the regime. The UN continually accused Iraq of human rights abuses. The defection of Lt. Gen. Hussein Kamal Hassan Al Majeed to Jordan last August, the mastermind of Iraq's military buildup and his revelation of Iraq misleading the UN on her disarmament program have complicated the situation.

The economic sanctions, aimed at forcing the regime to dismantle its military program have only led to a shortage of food and medicines, a drastic fall in the value of the Iraqi dinar and boundless economic woes.

Today many Iraqis in the Kingdom who believe that the regime is still as ruthless as ever expressed fear that the

sanctions may never be fully lifted.

"The international community will always regard Iraq as a threat if there is no change in regime in Iraq," a 27-year-old Iraqi civil engineer, living in Amman who refused to be identified said.

"A new system based on democracy and pluralism must take place," he added.

But this is just one view. After the Gulf War many Iraqis abroad and in the Kingdom popularized the need for a government based on democracy.

Simma Hurmuzy, a young Iraqi woman who came with her family to Amman five years ago believes that an adoption of the resolution may serve as a precedent for the total lifting of the sanctions. "I can't tell how long it may take for the situation to become economically bearable as I'm not a politician, but I'm quite confident that things will be fine again someday."

Currently, food prices in Iraq have been slashed by half since the oil minister, Amir Rashid announced to the public who are hungry for oil news on 19 January that Iraq was finally ready to discuss the oil-for-food deal with the UN.

The Iraqi dinar has risen dramatically against the US dollar, trading at 1000 to the dollar as compared with almost 3000 earlier this month. A further surge in the dinar is expected with more reduction in prices. ■

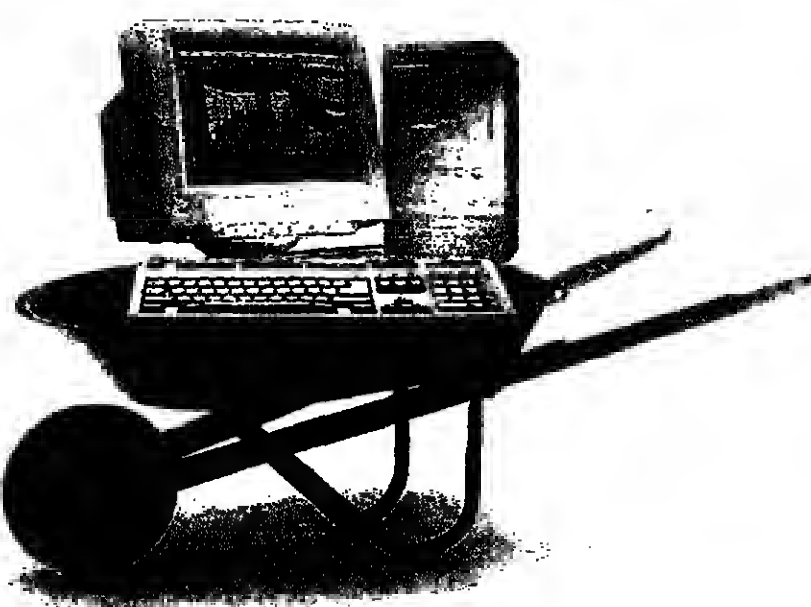
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